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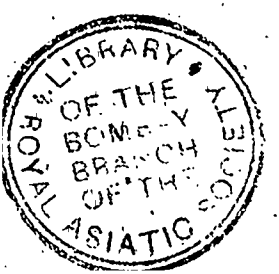
GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, AND ANTIQUITIES

OF

PARTHIA.



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THE

SIXTH GREAT ORIENTAL MONARCHY;

OR THE

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, & ANTIQUITIES OF PARTHIA,

COLLECTED AND ILLUSTRATED FROM ANCIENT AND MODERN SOURCES

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ac.

BY

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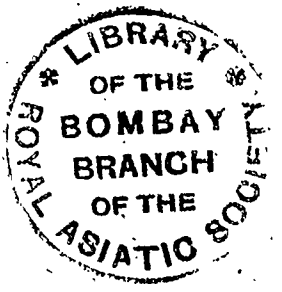

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PREFACE.

THE FOLLOWING WORK is intended, in part, as a continuation of the ancient History of the East, already treated by the author at some length in his 'Five Great Monarchies;' but it is also, and more expressly, intended as a supplement to the ancient History of the West, as that history is ordinarily presented to moderns under its two recognised divisions of 'Histories of Greece' and 'Histories of Rome.' Especially, it seemed to the writer that the picture of the world during the Roman period, commonly put before students in 'Histories of Rome,' was defective, not to say false, in its omission to recognise the real position of Parthia during the three most interesting centuries of that period, as a counterpoise to the power of Rome, a second figure in the picture not much inferior to the first, a rival state dividing with Rome the attention of mankind and the sovereignty of the known earth. Writers of Roman history have been too much in the habit of representing the later Republic and early Empire as, practically, a Universal Monarchy, a Power unchecked, unbalanced, having no other limits than those of the civilised world, engrossing consequently the whole attention of all thinking men, and free to

act exactly as it pleased without any regard to opinion beyond its own borders. One of the most popular [1] enlarges on the idea—an idea quite inconsistent with the fact—that for the man who provoked the hostility of the ruler of Rome there was no refuge upon the whole face of the earth but some wild and barbarous region, where refinement was unknown, and life would not have been worth having. To the present writer the truth seems to be that Rome never was in the position supposed—that from first to last, from the time of Pompey's Eastern Conquests to the Fall of the Empire, there was always in the world a Second Power, civilised or semi-civilised, which in a true sense balanced Rome,[2] acted as a counterpoise and a check, had to be consulted or considered, held a place in all men's thoughts, and finally furnished a not intolerable refuge to such as had provoked Rome's master beyond forgiveness. This Power for nearly three centuries (B.C. 64—A.D. 225) was Parthia, after which it was Persia under the Sassanian kings. In the hope of gradually vindicating to Parthia her true place in the world's history, the Author has in his 'Manual of Ancient History' (published by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press) placed the Parthians *alongside* of the Romans, and treated of their history at a moderate length. But it has seemed to him that something more was requisite. He could not expect

[1] Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, vol. i. ch. iii. sub fin.)

[2] The ancient writers are liberal in their admissions of this fact. (See Justin, xli. 1. § 7; Dio Cass. xl. 14; Strab. xi. 9, § 2; Plin. *H. N.* v. 25; and Herodian, iv. 18.) It is surprising that moderns have so generally overlooked these passages.

that students would be able to give Parthia her proper place in their thoughts, unless her history were collected and put forth in a readable form with some fulness. He has, therefore, employed most of his leisure during the last two years in writing the present work, which he commends to students of the later Greek and Roman periods as supplemental to the modern Greek and Roman histories in which those periods are commonly studied.

The Parthian Chronology depends very much upon coins. In preparing this portion of his work the Author has been greatly indebted to aid kindly rendered him by Mr. R. Stuart Poole and Mr. Gardiner of the British Museum. The representations of coins in the work have been, with one exception, taken by the Author from the originals in the National Collection. For the illustrations of Parthian architecture and art he is indebted to the published works of Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Ross, the late Mr. Loftus, and MM. Flandin and Coste. He feels also bound to express his obligations to the late Mr. Lindsay, the numismatic portion of whose work on Parthia[1] he has found of much service.

Canterbury: December 1872.

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[1] *History and Coinage of the Parthians*, published at Cork in 1852.

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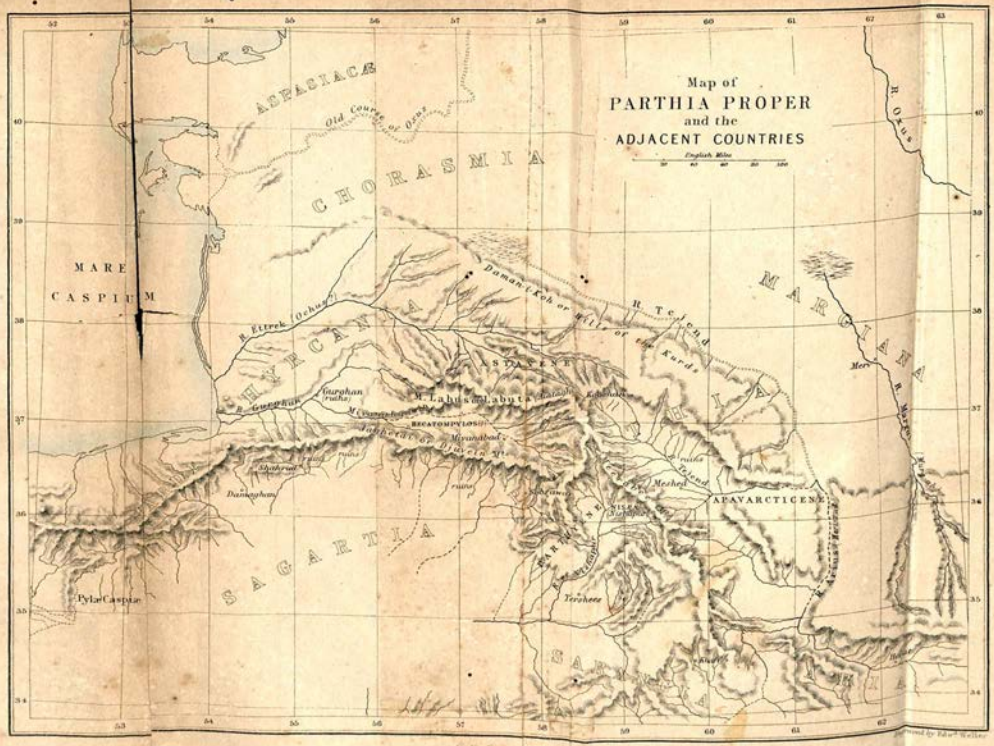
Erratum.

P. 263, l. 19, *for* Pharasmanes *read* Mithridates.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ROYAL ASIATIC

A HISTORY OF PARTHIA.

CHAPTER I.

Geography of Parthia Proper. Character of the Region. Climate. Character of the surrounding Countries.

'Parthiæ pleraque finium aut æstus aut frigoris magnitudo possidet, quippe cum montes nix, et campos æstus infestet.'—Justin, xli. 1.

THE broad tract of desert which, eastward of the Caspian Sea, extends from the Moughojar hills to the Indian Ocean, a distance of above 1,500 miles, is interrupted about midway by a strip of territory possessing features of much beauty and attraction. This strip, narrow compared to the desert on either side of it, is yet, looked at by itself, a region of no inconsiderable dimensions, extending, as it does from east to west,[1] a distance of 320, and from north to south of nearly 200 miles. The mountain chain, which running southward of the Caspian, skirts the great plateau of Iran, or Persia, on the north, broadens out, after it passes the south-eastern corner of the sea, into a valuable and productive mountain-region. Four or five distinct ranges[2] here run parallel to one another, having between them latitudinal valleys, with glens transverse to their courses. The sides of the

[1] The limit, eastward, of the region here described is the course of the Heri-rud, which pierces the mountain chain in long. 61° E. nearly.

[2] The chief of these are known as the *Daman-i-Koh*, the *Ala Tagh*, and the *Jaghetai* or *Djuvein* mountains.

valleys are often well wooded;[1] the flat ground at the foot of the hills is fertile; water abounds; and the streams gradually collect into rivers of a considerable size.

The fertile territory in this quarter is further increased by the extension of cultivation to a considerable distance from the base of the most southern of the ranges, in the direction of the Great Iranic desert. The mountains send down a number of small streams towards the south; and the water of these, judiciously husbanded by means of reservoirs and *kanats*, is capable of spreading fertility over a broad belt at the foot of the hills;[2] which, left to nature, would be almost as barren as the desert itself, into which it would, in fact, be absorbed.

It was undoubtedly in the region which has been thus briefly described, that the ancient home of the Parthians lay. In this neighbourhood alone are found the geographic names which the most ancient writers who mention the Parthians connect with them.[3] Here evidently the Parthians were settled[4] at the time when Alexander the Great over-ran the East, and first made the Greeks thoroughly familiar with the Parthian name and territory. Here, lastly, in the time of the highest Parthian splendour and prosperity, did a province of the Empire retain the name of Parthyêné, or Parthia Proper;[5] and here, also, in their palmiest

---

[1] See Fraser's *Khorasan*, pp. 433, 434, 598, &c.

[2] Ibid. pp. 380, 405, 406, &c.

[3] Herodotus unites the Parthians with the Chorasmians (*Kharesm*), the Sogdians, and the Arians (*Heratees*), and again with the Hyrcanians (*Gurghan*), the Sarangians, and the Thamanæans (Herod. iii. 93, 117). In the Inscriptions of Darius, Parthia is connected with Sarangia, Aria, Sagartia (the Iranic desert), and Hyrcania. (See the author's *Herodotus*, vol. iv. p. 162, 2nd edition.)

[4] Arrian, *Exp. Alex.* iii. 25.

[5] Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 12. Compare Plin. *H. N.* vi. 25.

days, did the Parthian kings continue to have a capital and a residence.[1]

Parthia Proper, however, was at no time coextensive with the region described. A portion of that region formed the district called Hyrcania; and it is not altogether easy to determine what were the limits between the two. The evidence goes, on the whole, to show that, while Hyrcania lay towards the west and north, the Parthian country was that towards the south and east,[2] the valleys of the Ettrek and Gurghan constituting the main portions of the former, while the tracts east and south of those valleys, as far as the sixty-first degree of E. longitude, constituted the latter.

If the limits of Parthia Proper be thus defined, it will have nearly corresponded to the modern Persian province of Khorasan. It will have extended from about Damaghan (long. 54° 10′) upon the west,[3] to the Heri-rud upon the east, and have comprised the modern districts of Damaghan, Shah-rud, Sebzawar, Nishapur, Meshed, Shebri-No, and Tersheez. Its length from east to west will have been about 300 miles, and its average width about 100 or 120. It will have contained an area of about 33,000 square miles, being thus about equal in size to Ireland, Bavaria, or St. Domingo.

The character of the district has been already stated in general terms; but some further particulars may

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[1] Hecatompylos. (See Polyb. x. 25; Strab. xi. 9, § 1; Diod. Sic. xvii. 57.)

[2] See especially Arrian, *Exp. Alex.* iii. 23-25; Plin. *H. N.*, l.s.c.; and Isid. Char. § 10–12.

[3] According to Strabo (l.s.c.), the western boundary of Parthia was at the Caspian Gates, or more than a hundred miles further west than Damaghan; but the region immediately east of the Gates is more commonly assigned either to Hyrcania or to Media.

now be added. It consists, in the first place, of a mountain and a plain region—the mountain region lying towards the north and the plain region towards the south. The mountain region is composed of three main ranges, the Daman-i-Koh, or Hills of the Kurds,[1] upon the north, skirting the great desert of Kharesm; the Alatagh and Meerabee mountains in the centre; and the Jaghetai or Djuvein range, upon the south, which may be regarded as continued in the hills above Tersheez and Khaff. The three ranges are parallel, running east and west, but with an inclination, more or less strong, to the north of west and the south of east. The northern and central ranges are connected by a water-shed, which runs nearly east and west, a little to the south of Kooshan, and separates the head streams of the Ettrek from those of the Meshed river. The central and southern ranges are connected by a more decided mountain line, a transverse ridge which runs nearly north and south, dividing between the waters that flow westward into the Gurghan, and those which form the river of Nishapur. This conformation of the mountains leaves between the ranges three principal valleys, the valley of Meshed towards the south-east, between the Kurdish range and the Alatagh and Meerabee; that of Miyanabad towards the west, between the Alatagh and the Jaghetai; and that of Nishapur towards the south, between the eastern end of the Jaghetai and the western flank of the Meerabee. As the valleys are three in number, so likewise are the

[1] Shah Abbas the First transplanted about 15,000 Kurds from the Turkish frontier to Khorasan, and settled them in the mountain region, that they might guard it against the Usbegs and other Tatar tribes. The descendants of these colonists still occupy most of the range between the Meshed valley and the Kharesmian desert.

rivers, which are known respectively as the Tejend, or river of Meshed, the river of Nishapur, and the river of Miyanabad.[1]

The Tejend, which is the principal stream of the three, rises from several sources in the hills south of Kooshan, and flows with a south-easterly course down the valley of Meshed, receiving numerous tributaries from both sides,[2] until it reaches that city, when it bends eastward, and finding a way through the Kurdish range, joins the course of the Heri-rud, about long. 61° 10′. Here its direction is completely changed. Turning at an angle, which is slightly acute, it proceeds to flow to the west of north, along the northern base of the Kurdish range, from which it receives numerous small streams, till it ends finally in a large swamp or marsh, in lat. 39°, long. 57°, nearly.[3] The entire length of the stream, including only main windings, is about 475 miles. In its later course, however, it is often almost dry, the greater portion of the water being consumed in irrigation in the neighbourhood of Meshed.

The river of Nishapur is formed by numerous small streams, which descend from the mountains that on three sides inclose that city. Its water is at times wholly consumed in the cultivation of the plain; but the natural course may be traced, running in a southerly and south-westerly direction, until it debouches from the hills in the vicinity of Tersheez.

The Miyanabad stream is believed to be a tributary of the Gurghan. It rises from several sources in the

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[1] Fraser, *Khorasan*, p. 554.

[2] One of the chief of these conveys to the Tejend the waters of the *Tçheshma Gilass*, a small lake beautifully clear, on the western side of the valley, about twenty-five miles above Meshed.

[3] Vambéry, *Travels in Central Asia*, Map.

transverse range joining the Alatagh to the Jaghetai, the streams from which all flow westward in narrow valleys, uniting about long. 57° 35′. The course of the river from this point to Piperne has not been traced, but it is believed to run in a general westerly direction along the southern base of the Alatagh, and to form a junction with the Gurghan a little below the ruins of the same name. Its length to this point is probably about 200 miles.

The elevation of the mountain chains is not great. No very remarkable peaks occur in them; and it may be doubted whether they anywhere attain a height of above 6,000 feet. They are for the most part barren and rugged, very scantily supplied with timber,[1] and only in places capable of furnishing a tolerable pasturage to flocks and herds. The valleys, on the other hand, are rich and fertile in the extreme; that of Meshed, which extends a distance of above a hundred miles from north-west to south-east, and is from twenty to thirty miles broad, has almost everywhere a good and deep soil,[2] is abundantly supplied with water, and yields a plentiful return even to the simplest and most primitive cultivation. The plain about Nishapur, which is in length from eighty to ninety miles, and in width from forty to sixty, boasts a still greater fertility.[3]

The flat country along the southern base of the mountains, which ancient writers regard as Parthia

[1] In this respect the mountains of ancient Parthia present a strong contrast to those of the neighbouring Hyrcania. The banks of the Gurghan and Ettrek are richly wooded (Fraser, pp. 599–602; Arrian, *Exp. Alex.* iii. 23); while the mountains of eastern Khorasan are almost destitute of trees. (Fraser, pp. 407, 470, &c.)

[2] Even where the surface was gravel, Mr. Fraser noticed 'a richer stratum beneath' (p. 550).

[3] Kinneir, *Persian Empire*, pp. 185, 186; Fraser, *Khorasan*, pp. 405, 406.

par excellence,[1] is a strip of territory about 300 miles long, varying in width according to the labour and the skill applied by its inhabitants to the perfecting of a system of irrigation. At present the *kanats*, or underground water-courses, are seldom carried to a distance of more than a mile or two from the foot of the hills; but it is thought that anciently the cultivation was extended considerably further. Ruined cities dispersed throughout the tract[2] sufficiently indicate its capabilities, and in the few places where much attention is paid to agriculture, the results are such as to imply that the soil is more than ordinarily productive.[3] The salt desert lies, however, in most places within ten or fifteen miles of the hills; and beyond this distance it is obviously impossible that the 'Atak' or 'Skirt' should at any time have been habitable.[4]

It is evident that the entire tract above described must have been at all times a valuable and much coveted region. Compared with the arid and inhospitable deserts which adjoin it upon the north and south, Khorasan, the ancient Parthia and Hyrcania, is a terrestrial Paradise. Parthia, though scantily wooded,[5] still produces in places the pine, the walnut, the sycamore, the ash, the poplar, the willow, the vine, the mulberry, the apricot, and numerous other fruit trees.[6] Saffron, assa-fœtida, and the gum ammoniac plant, are indigenous in parts of it.[7] Much of the soil is suited for

[1] Plin. *H. N.* vi. 25.

[2] As Bostam (Fraser, p. 336), Khyzabad (Ibid. p. 359), and others. (Ibid. pp. 373, 374, 380, &c.)

[3] Kinneir, p. 185; Fraser, pp. 343, 379, &c.

[4] The name 'Atak' is given to the skirts of the mountains both north and south of Parthia. It is the Turanian correspondent of the Arian *daman*, which has the same application and meaning. (Fraser, p. 245.)

[5] See above, p. 6, *note* [1]. Yet Strabo says (xi. 9, § 1) that it was 'thickly wooded' (δασεῖα).

[6] Fraser, pp. 401, 405, 432, 433, 436, &c.; Kinneir, p. 175.

[7] Kinneir, p. 185; Fraser, Appendix, p. 25.

the cultivation of wheat, barley, and cotton.[1] The ordinary return upon wheat and barley is reckoned at ten for one.[2] Game abounds in the mountains, and fish in the underground water-courses.[3] Among the mineral treasures of the region may be enumerated copper, lead, iron, salt,[4] and one of the most exquisite of gems, the turquoise.[5] This gem does not appear to be mentioned by ancient writers; but it is so easily obtainable, that we can scarcely suppose it was not known from very ancient times.

The severity of the climate of Parthia is strongly stated by Justin.[6] According to modern travellers, the winters, though protracted, are not very inclement, the thermometer rarely sinking below ten or eleven degrees of Fahrenheit during the nights,[7] and during the daytime rising, even in December and January,[8] to 40° or 50°. The cold weather, however, which commences about October, continues till nearly the end of March, when storms of sleet and hail are common.[9] Much snow falls in the earlier portion of the winter, and the valleys are scarcely clear of it till March. On the mountains it remains much longer, and forms the chief source of supply to the rivers during the spring and the early summer time. In summer the heat is considerable, more especially in the region known as the 'Atak;' and here, too, the unwholesome wind, which blows from the southern desert, is felt from time

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[1] Fraser, pp. 319, 379, &c.

[2] So Fraser, p. 335. Macdonald Kinneir, with unwonted extravagance, speaks of the return from dry grain being a hundred, and from rice four hundred fold! (*Persian Empire*, p. 178.)

[3] Fraser, pp. 388 and 406.

[4] Kinneir, p. 184; Fraser, pp. 367, 371, 413, 421, &c.

[5] On the turquoise mines of Nishapur, see Fraser, ch. xvi. pp. 407–417.

[6] See the passage quoted at the head of the chapter.

[7] Fraser, Appendix, p. 134.

[8] Ibid. pp. 303, 343, and 581.

[9] Ibid. pp. 436, 552, and 554.

to time as a terrible scourge.[1] But in the upland country the heat is at no time very intense, and the natives boast that they are not compelled by it to sleep on their house-tops during more than one month in the year.[2]

The countries by which Parthia Proper was bounded were the following: Chorasmia, Margiana, Aria, Sarangia, Sagartia, and Hyrcania.

Chorasmia lay upon the north, consisting of the low tract between the most northerly of the Parthian mountain chains and the old course of the Oxus. This region, which is for the most part an arid and inhospitable desert,[3] can at no time have maintained more than a sparse and scanty population. The Turkoman tribes which at the present day roam over the waste, feeding their flocks and herds alternately on the banks of the Oxus and the Tejend, or finding a bare subsistence for them about the ponds and pools left by the winter rains, represent, it is probable, with sufficient faithfulness, the ancient inhabitants, who, whatever their race, must always have been nomads, and can never have exceeded a few hundred thousands.[4] On this side Parthia must always have been tolerably safe from attacks, unless the Cis-Oxianian tribes were reinforced, as they sometimes were, by hordes from beyond the river.

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[1] Kinneir, p. 170.

[2] Fraser, p. 557.

[3] Vambéry calls it 'that immense awful desert where the traveller may wander about for weeks and weeks without finding a drop of sweet water, or the shelter of a single tree' (*Travels*, p. 302). Mouravieff says: 'This country exhibits the image of death, or rather of the desolation left behind by a great convulsion of nature. Neither birds nor quadrupeds are found in it; no verdure nor vegetation cheers the sight, except here and there at long intervals some spots on which there grow a few stunted shrubs.' (See De Hell's *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea*, p. 326, E. T.)

[4] M. Vambéry reckons the entire Turkoman population south of the Oxus from the Caspian to Balkh at 196,500 tents, or 982,500 souls. (*Travels*, p. 309.) Chorasmia was not more than about one-half of this region.

On the north-east was Margiana, sometimes regarded as a country by itself, sometimes reckoned a mere district of Bactria.[1] This was the tract of fertile land upon the Murg-ab, or ancient Margus river, which is known among moderns as the district of Merv. The Murg-ab is a stream flowing from the range of the Paropamisus, in a direction which is a little east of north; it debouches from the mountains in about lat. 36° 25′, and thence makes its way through the desert. Before it reaches Merv, it is eighty yards wide and five feet deep,[2] thus carrying a vast body of water. By a judicious use of dykes and canals, this fertilising fluid was in ancient times carried to a distance of more than twenty-five miles from the natural course of the river; and by these means an oasis was created with a circumference of above 170, and consequently a diameter of above fifty miles.[3] This tract, inclosed on every side by deserts, was among the most fertile of all known regions; it was especially famous for its vines, which grew to such a size that a single man could not encircle their stems with his two arms, and bore clusters that were a yard long.[4] Margiana possessed, however, as a separate country, little military strength, and it was only as a portion of some larger and more populous territory that it could become formidable to the Parthians.

South of Margiana, and adjoining upon Parthia

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[1] In the Behistun Inscription Darius evidently includes Margiana (*Margush*) in Bactria (col. iii. par. 3, 4). Strabo, however (xi. 10, § 2), Ptolemy (vi. 11), and Isidore (*Mans. Parth.* § 14) make it a separate country.

[2] See the Map to Vambéry's *Travels*.

[3] Strab. xi. 10, § 2. There seems no reason to doubt this statement, though Mr. Fraser supposes that the irrigation could never have been carried to a much greater distance than twelve or fourteen miles. (*Khorasan*, App. p. 56.)

[4] Strab. l.s.c.

towards the east, was Aria, the tract which lies about the modern Herat. This was for the most part a mountain region, very similar in its general character to the mountainous portion of Parthia,[1] but of much smaller dimensions.[2] Its people were fairly warlike; but the Parthian population was probably double or triple their number, and Parthia consequently had but little to fear in this quarter.

Upon the south-east Parthia was bordered by Sarangia, the country of the Sarangæ, or Drangæ. This appears to have been the district south of the Herat valley, reaching thence as far as the Hamoon, or Sea of Seistan. It is a country of hills and downs,[3] watered by a number of somewhat scanty streams, which flow south-westwards from the Paropamisus to the Hamoon. Its population can never have been great, and they were at no time aggressive or enterprising, so that on this side also the Parthians were secure, and had to deal with no formidable neighbour.

Sagartia succeeded to Sarangia towards the west, and bordered Parthia along almost the whole of its southern frontier. Excepting in the vicinity of Tebbes and Toun[4] (lat. 34°, long. 56° to 58°), this district is an absolute desert, the haunt of the gazelle and the wild ass,[5] dry, saline, and totally devoid of vegetation. The wild nomads, who wandered over its wastes, obtaining a scanty subsistence by means of the lasso,[6]

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[1] See Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 139, 165; Fraser, *Khorasan*, App. pp. 30-32; Vambéry, pp. 257-270.

[2] Strabo gives Aria a length of 2,000 stades (230 miles), and a breadth of 300 stades (35 miles). This would make its area about 8,000 square miles, or less than one-third of the area of Parthia (supra, p. 3).

[3] Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 273, 274.

[4] Fraser, p. 246, and App. p. 24.

[5] Vambéry, p. 288.

[6] Herod. vii. 85. If the Sagartians used the lasso in war, we may be sure that, like the inhabitants of

were few in number,[1] scattered, and probably divided by feuds. Southern Parthia might occasionally suffer from their raids; but they were far too weak to constitute a serious danger to the mountain country.

Lastly, towards the west and the north-west, Parthia was bordered by Hyrcania, a region geographically in the closest connection with it, very similar in general character, but richer, warmer, and altogether more desirable. Hyrcania was, as already observed,[2] the western and north-western portion of that broad mountain region which has been described as intervening between the eastern shores of the Caspian and the river Arius, or Heri-rud. It consisted mainly of the two rich valleys of the Gurghan and Ettrek, with the mountain chains enclosing or dividing them. Here on the slopes of the hills grow the oak, the beech, the elm, the alder, the wild cherry; here luxuriant vines spring from the soil on every side, raising themselves aloft by the aid of their stronger sisters, and hanging in wild festoons from tree to tree; beneath their shade the ground is covered with flowers of various kinds, primroses, violets, lilies, hyacinths, and others of unknown species; while in the flat land at the bottom of the valleys are meadows of the softest and the tenderest grass, capable of affording to numerous flocks and herds an excellent and unfailing pasture.[3] Abundant game finds shelter in the forests,[4] while towards the mouths of the rivers, where the ground is for the most part marshy, large herds of wild boars

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the Pampas, they employed it also in peace, to capture the animals which they hunted.

[1] Eight thousand is the largest number which we find brought into the field by the Sagartians. (Herod. l. s. c.)

[2] See above, p. 3.

[3] See the graphic descriptions of Mr. Fraser (*Khorasan*, pp. 599, 600, 608, &c.)

[4] Ibid. p. 616.

are frequent; a single herd sometimes containing hundreds.[1] Altogether Hyrcania was a most productive and desirable country, capable of sustaining a dense population, and well deserving Strabo's description of it as 'highly favoured of Heaven.'[2] The area of the country was, however, small;[3] probably not much exceeding one-half that of Parthia Proper; and thus the people were not sufficiently numerous to cause the Parthians much apprehension.

The situation and character of Parthia thus, on the whole, favoured her becoming an imperial power. She had abundant resources within herself; she had a territory apt for the production of a hardy race of men; and she had no neighbours of sufficient strength to keep her down, when she once developed the desire to become dominant. Surprise has been expressed at her rise.[4] But it is perhaps more astonishing that she passed so many centuries in obscurity before she became an important state, than that she raised herself at last to the first position among the Oriental nations.

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[1] Vambéry, p. 72.

[2] Σῤῥόδρα εὐδαίμων (Strab. xi. 7, § 2). According to this writer, a single vine in Hyrcania produced a *metretes* (nine gallons) of wine, a single fig-tree produced sixty *medimni* (ninety bushels) of figs, and corn did not require to be sown, but sprang from the casual droppings of the last year's crop.

[3] When Hyrcania is called by Strabo 'large' (πολλή), he intends to compare it, not with Parthia, but with the small districts occupied by separate tribes along the south coast of the Caspian Sea (Strabo, xi. 7, § 1, 2). A comparison of it with Parthia is difficult, owing to the uncertainty of their respective boundaries; but if we regard the line of demarcation as running along the mountains south of the Gurghan, thence passing to the Alatagh, and proceeding along the water-shed south of Kooshan to the Kurdish range about Mohammedabad, the proportions of the two will be as stated in the text.

[4] See Justin, xli. 1. 'Hi et Assyriorum et Medorum temporibus inter Orientis populos obscurissimi fuere. Postea quoque cum imperium Orientis a Medis ad Persas translatum est, veluti vulgus sine nomine, præda victorum fuere. Postremo Macedonibus, triumphato Oriente, servierunt: *ut cuivis mirum videatur* ad tantam eos felicitatem provectos, ut imperent gentibus, sub quarum imperio veluti servile vulgus fuere'

Her ambition and her material strength were plants of slow growth; it took several hundreds of years for them to attain maturity: when however this point was reached, the circumstances of her geographical position stood her in good stead, and enabled her rapidly to extend her way over the greater portion of Western Asia.

CHAPTER II.

Early notices of the Parthians. Their Ethnic character and connections. Their position under the Persian Monarchs, from Cyrus the Great to Darius III. (*Codomannus*).

Πάρθων γένος Σκυθικόν.—Arrian, Fr. 1.

THE Parthians do not appear in history until a comparatively recent period. Their name occurs nowhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. They obtain no mention in the Zendavesta. The Assyrian Inscriptions are wholly silent concerning them. It is not until the time of Darius Hystaspis that we have trustworthy evidence of their existence as a distinct people.[1] In the inscriptions of this king we find their country included under the name of *Parthva* or *Parthwa* among the provinces of the Persian Empire, joined in two places with Sarangia, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, and Sogdiana,[2] and in a third with these same countries and Sagartia.[3] We find, moreover, an account of a rebellion in which the Parthians took part. In the troubles which broke out upon the death of the Pseudo-Smerdis, B.C. 521, Parthia revolted, in conjunction (as it would seem) with Hyrcania, espousing the cause of that Median pretender, who, declaring himself a descendant of the old Median monarchs, set

[1] Diodorus enumerates the Parthians among the nations conquered by Ninus (ii. 2, § 3), and also says that in the time of Cyaxares they revolted from the Medes and placed themselves under Scythian protection. But no value can be set upon these stories, which he adopted from the untrustworthy Ctesias.

[2] See *Behist. Ins.* col. i. par. 6, and *Nakhsh-i-Rustam Ins.* par. 3.

[3] See the great inscription of Darius at Persepolis, par. 2, § 3.

himself up as a rival to Darius. Hystaspes, the father of Darius, held at this time the Parthian satrapy. In two battles within the limits of his province he defeated the rebels, who must have brought into the field a considerable force, since in one of the two engagements they lost in killed and prisoners between 10,000 and 11,000 men. After their second defeat the Parthians made their submission, and once more acknowledged Darius for their sovereign.[1]

With these earliest Oriental notices of the Parthians agree entirely such passages as contain any mention of them in the more ancient literature of the Greeks. Hecatæus of Miletus, who was contemporary with Darius Hystaspis, made the Parthians adjoin upon the Chorasmians in the account which he gave of the geography of Asia.[2] Herodotus spoke of them as a people subject to the Persians in the reign of Darius, and assigned them to the sixteenth satrapy, which comprised also the Arians, the Sogdians, and the Chorasmians.[3] He said that they took part in the expedition of Xerxes against Greece (B.C. 480), serving in the army on foot under the same commander as the Chorasmians, and equipped like them with bows and arrows, and with spears of no great length.[4] In another passage he mentioned their being compelled to pay the Persian water tax, and spoke of the great need which they had of water for the irrigation of their millet and sesamé crops.[5]

It is evident that these notices agree with the Persian accounts, both as to the locality of the Parthians and as to the fact of their subjection to the

[1] *Behist. Its.* col. ii. par. 16, and col. iii. par. 1.
[2] Fr. 173.
[3] Herod. iii. 93.
[4] Ibid. vii. 66. Compare chap. 64.
[5] Ibid. iii. 117.

Persian government. They further agree in assigning to the Parthians a respectable military character, yet one of no very special eminency. On the ethnology of the nation, and the circumstances under which the country became an integral part of the Persian dominions, they throw no light. We have still to seek an answer to the questions, 'Who were the Parthians?' and 'How did they become Persian subjects?'

Who were the Parthians? It is not until the Parthians have emerged from obscurity and become a great people that ancient authors trouble themselves with inquiries as to their ethnic character and remote antecedents. Of the first writers who take the subject into their consideration, some are content to say that the Parthians were a race of Scyths, who at a remote date had separated from the rest of the nation, and had occupied the southern portion of the Chorasmian desert, whence they had gradually made themselves masters of the mountain region adjoining it.[1] Others added to this, that the Scythic tribe to which they belonged was called the Dahæ; that their own proper name was Parni, or Aparni; and that they had migrated originally from the country to the north of the Palus Mæotis, where they had left the great mass of their fellow tribesmen.[2] Subsequently, in the time of the Antonines, the theory was started that the Parthians were Scyths, whom Sesostris, on his return from his Scythian expedition, brought into Asia and settled in the mountain-tract lying east of the Caspian.[3]

It can scarcely be thought that these notices have

[1] As Trogus Pompeius, who is followed by Justin (xli. 1).

[2] Strab. xi. 9, § 3. Compare xi. 8, § 2.

[3] Arrian, Fr. 1.

very much historical value. Moderns are generally agreed that the Scythian conquests of Sesostris are an invention of the Egyptian priests, which they palmed on Herodotus[1] and Diodorus.[2] Could they be regarded as having really taken place, still the march back from Scythia to Egypt round the north and east of the Caspian Sea would be in the highest degree improbable. The settlement of the Parthians in Parthia by the returning conqueror is, in fact, a mere duplicate of the tale commonly told of his having settled the Colchians in Colchis,[3] and is equally worthless. The earlier authors, moreover, know nothing of the story, which first appears in the second century after our era, and as time goes on, becomes more circumstantial.[4]

Even the special connection of the Parthians with the Dahæ, and their migration from the shores of the Palus Mæotis, may be doubted. Strabo admits it to be uncertain whether there were any Dahæ at all about the Mæotis;[5] and, if there were, it would be open to question whether they were of the same race with the Dahæ of the Caspian.[6] As the settlement of the Parthians in the country called after their name dated from a time anterior to Darius Hystaspis, and the Greeks certainly did not set on foot any inquiries into their origin till at least two centuries later,[7] it

[1] See Herod. ii. 103.

[2] Diod. Sic. i. 55, § 4.

[3] Herod. ii. 104; Diod. Sic. l. s. c.

[4] John of Malala knows the number of the colonists (15,000), that they were all youths, and all warriors (p. 26; ed. Niebuhr).

[5] Strab. xi. 9, § 3. Οὐ πάνυ δ' ὡμολογεῖται Δάας εἶναί τινας τῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς Μαιώτιδος Σκυθῶν.

[6] Dahæ or Dai are found in a great variety of places, as in Persia Proper (Herod. i. 125), in Samaria (Ezr. iv. 9), in Thrace (Thuc. ii. 96), in the tract east of the Caspian (Strab. ix. 8, § 2), &c. It is not probable that they were all really the same people.

[7] The Greeks did not come into contact with the Parthians till B.C. 331. Probably they did not care much to inquire into their origin till after B.C. 255.

would be unlikely that the Parthians could give them a true account. The real groundwork of the stories told seems to have been twofold. First, there was a strong conviction on the part of those who came in contact with the Parthians, that they were Scyths; and secondly, it was believed that their name meant 'exiles.'[1] Hence it was necessary to suppose that they had migrated into their country from some portion of the tract known as Scythia to the Greeks, and it was natural to invent stories as to the particular circumstances of the migration.

The residuum of truth, or at any rate the important conviction of the ancient writers, which remains after their stories are sifted, is the Scythic character of the Parthian people. On this point, Strabo, Justin, and Arrian are agreed. The manners of the Parthians had, they tell us, much that was Scythic in them.[2] Their language was half-Scythic, half-Median.[3] They armed themselves in the Scythic fashion.[4] They were, in fact, Scyths in descent, in habits, in character.

But what are we to understand by this? May we assume at once that they were a Turanian people, in race, habits, and language akin to the various tribes of Turkomans who are at present dominant over the entire region between the Oxus and the Parthian mountain-tract, and within that tract have many settlements? May we assume that they stood in an attitude of natural hostility to the Arian nations by which they were surrounded, and that their revolt

[1] Justin, xli. 1; Eustath. ad Dionys. Per. l. 1047.

[2] Strab. xi. 9, § 2. Τὰ ἔθη τὰ ἔχοντα πολὺ μὲν τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ τὸ Σκυθικόν. Compare Plin. *H. N.* vi. 25.

[3] Justin, xli. 2. 'Sermo his inter Scythicum Medicumque medius, et ex utrisque mixtus.'

[4] Ibid. 'Armorum patrius ac Scythicus mos.'

was the assertion of independence by a down-trodden people after centuries of subjection to the yoke of a stranger? Did TURAN, in their persons, rise against IRAN after perhaps a thousand years of oppression, and renew the struggle for predominance in regions where the war had been waged before, and where it still continues to be waged at the present day?

Such conclusions cannot safely be drawn from the mere fact that the Scythic character of the Parthians is asserted in the strongest terms by the ancient writers. The term 'Scythic' is not, strictly speaking, ethnical. It designates a life rather than a descent, habits rather than blood. It is applied by the Greeks and Romans to Indo-European and Turanian races indifferently,[1] provided that they are nomads, dwelling in tents or carts, living on the produce of their flocks and herds, uncivilised, and, perhaps it may be added, accustomed to pass their lives on horseback. We cannot, therefore, assume that a nation is Turanian, simply because it is pronounced 'Scythic.' Still, as in fact the bulk of those races which have remained content with the nomadic condition, and which from the earliest times to the present day have led the life above described in the broad steppes of Europe and Asia, appear to have been of the Turanian type, a presumption is raised in favour of a people being Turanian by decided and concordant statements that it is Scythic. The presumption may of course be removed by evidence to the contrary; but, until such

[1] Strabo calls the Massagetæ Scyths (xi. 8, § 2). Pliny not only includes under the name all the tribes between Armenia and Northern India (*H. N.* vi. 25), but regards it as having originally extended to the Sarmatians and the Germans (ib. iv. 81). According to Strabo, some of the older Greek geographers called all the nations of the north either Scythians or Celto-Scythians (xi. 6, § 2).

evidence is produced it has weight, and constitutes an argument, the force of which is considerable.

In the present instance, the presumption raised is met by no argument of any great weight; while, on the other hand, it receives important confirmation from several different quarters. It is said, indeed, that as all, or almost all, the other nations of these parts were confessedly Arians (e.g. the Bactrians, the Sogdians, the Chorasmians, the Margians, the Arians of Herat, the Sagartians, the Sarangians, and the Hyrcanians), it would be strange if the Parthians belonged to a wholly different ethnic family.[1] But, in the first place, the existence of isolated nationalities, detached fragments of some greater ethnic mass, embodied amid alien material, is a fact familiar to ethnologists;[2] and, further, it is not at all certain that there were not other Turanian races in these parts, as, for instance, the Thamanæans. Again, it is said that the Parthians show their Arian extraction by their names; but this argument may be turned against those who adduce it. It is true that among the Parthian names a considerable number are not only Arian, but distinctly Persian—e.g., Mithridates, Tiridates, Artabanus, Orobazus, Rhodaspes—but the bulk of the names have an entirely different character. There is nothing Arian in such appellations as Amminapes, Bacasis, Pacorus, Vonones, Sinnaces, Abdus, Abdageses, Gotarzes, Vologeses, Mnasciras, Sanatrœces; nor anything markedly Arian in Priapatius,[3] Himerus,

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[1] See the article on Parthia in Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*.

[2] The Etruscans in Italy, the Galatians in Asia Minor, the Basques in Spain, are cases in point. It would be easy to adduce others.

[3] Priapatius has indeed been explained as equivalent to the Zendic *Frijapaitis*, 'lover of his father' (Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 285, note 3). But the etymology is uncertain.

Orodes, Aprætæus, Ornospades, Parrhaces, Vasaces, Monesis, Exedares. If the Parthians were Arians, what account is to be given of these words? That they employed a certain number of Persian names is sufficiently explained by their subjection during more than two centuries to the Persian rule. We are also distinctly told that they affected Persian habits, and desired to be looked upon as Persians.[1] The Arian names borne by Parthians no more show them to be Arians in race, than the Norman names adopted so widely by the Welsh show them to be Northmen. On the other hand, the non-Arian names in the former case are like the non-Norman names in the latter, and equally indicate a second source of nomenclature, in which should be contained the key to the true ethnology of the people.

The non-Arian character of the Parthians is signified, if not proved, by the absence of their name from the Zendavesta. The Zendavesta enumerates among Arian nations the Bactrians, the Sogdians, the Margians, the Hyrcanians, the Arians of Herat, and the Chorasmians, or ALL *the important nations of these parts except the Parthians.* The Parthian country it mentions under the name of *Nisaya*,[2] or Nisæa, implying apparently that the Parthians were not yet settled in it. The only ready way of reconciling the geography of the Zendavesta with that of later ages is to suppose the Parthians a non-Arian nation, who intruded themselves among the early Arian settlements, coming probably from the north, the great home of the Turanians.

Some positive arguments in favour of the Turanian origin of the Parthians may be based upon their

[1] Julian, *Or. de Constant. gest.* ii. p. 63, A.

[2] See Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. viii. p. 56.

names. The Parthians affect, in their names, the termination *-ac* or *-ak*, as, for instance, in Arsac-es, Sinnac-es, Parrhaces, Vasaces, Sanatræces, Phraataces, &c.—a termination which characterises the primitive Babylonian, the Basque, and most of the Turanian tongues. The termination *-geses*, found in such names as Volo-geses, Abda-geses, and the like, may be compared with the *-ghiz* of Yenghiz. The Turanian root *annap*, 'God,' is perhaps traceable in Amm-inap-es. If the Parthian 'Chosroës' represents the Persian 'Kurush' or Cyrus, the corruption which the word has undergone is such as to suggest a Tatar articulation.

The remains of the Parthian language, which we possess, beyond their names, are too scanty and too little to be depended on to afford us any real assistance in settling the question of their ethnic character. Besides the words *surena*, 'commander-in-chief,' and *karta* or *kerta*, 'city,' 'fort,' there is scarcely one of which we can be assured that it was really understood by the Parthians in the sense assigned to it.[1] Of these two, the latter, which is undoubtedly Arian, may have been adopted from the Persians:[2] the former is non-Arian, but has no known Turanian congeners.

If, however, the consideration of the Parthian language does not help us to determine their race, a con-

[1] Justin says that the word 'Parthi' meant 'exiles' in the Scythic speech (xli. 1), but this derivation assumes the proper original form of the name to be *Parada* (Sanskrit *pardes*, = 'of another country'), whereas the earliest and probably most correct form is *Parthwa*. (Compare Greek Παρθυήνη and Παρθυαῖοι.) Lassen translates the word 'Parthi' by 'those who march over the borders' (*Ind. Alt.* l. s. c.), but gives no explanation of his etymology. Ammianus tells us that a commander of the cavalry was called *vitaxa* by the Parthians; but Hesychius alters both the word and the meaning, making the former βίαταξ, and the latter 'king.'

[2] The Persian form seems to have been *garda*, as in Parsagarda (Plin. *H. N.* vi. 26), which became corrupted into Pasargadæ. The Parthian is, like the Armenian, *certa*, as in Vologesocerta (ib. l. s. c.)

sideration of their manners and customs strengthens much the presumption that they were Turanians. Like the Turkoman and Tatar tribes generally, they passed almost their whole lives on horseback, conversing, transacting business, buying and selling, even eating on their horses.[1] They practised polygamy, secluded their women from the sight of men, punished unfaithfulness with extreme severity, delighted in hunting, and rarely ate any flesh but that which they obtained in this way, were moderate eaters[2] but great drinkers,[3] did not speak much, but yet were very unquiet, being constantly engaged in stirring up trouble either at home or abroad.[4] A small portion of the nation alone was free; the remainder were the slaves of the privileged few.[5] Nomadic habits continued to prevail among a portion of those who remained in their primitive seats, even in the time of their greatest national prosperity;[6] and a coarse, rude, and semi-barbarous character attached always even to the most advanced part of the nation, to the king, the court, and the nobles generally, a character which, despite a certain varnish of civilisation, was constantly showing itself in their dealings with each other and with foreign nations. 'The Parthian monarchs,' as Gibbon justly observes,[7] 'like the Mogul (Mongol) sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors, and the imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of

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[1] Justin, xli. 3. 'Equis omni tempore vectantur: illis bella, illis convivia, illis publica ac privata negotia obeunt.' Compare Vambéry's account of the modern Usbegs (*Travels in Central Asia*, p. 345 and plate opposite).

[2] Ibid. 'In cibum parci.'

[3] Plin. *H. N.* xiv. 22.

[4] Justin, l. s. c. 'Semper aut in externos aut in domesticos motus inquieti; natura taciti.'

[5] Ibid. xli. 2. Compare the case of the Mongols, where the 'Golden Horde' alone was free.

[6] Plin. *H. N.*, vi. 25.

[7] *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 341. (Smith's edition.)

Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris.' Niebuhr seems even to doubt whether the Parthians dwelt in cities at all.[1] He represents them as maintaining from first to last their nomadic habits, and regards the insurrection by which their empire was brought to an end as a rising of the inhabitants of towns—the Tadjiks[2] of those times—against the Ilyats or wanderers, who had oppressed them for centuries. This is, no doubt, an over-statement; but it has a foundation in fact, since wandering habits and even tent-life were affected by the Parthians during the most flourishing period of their empire.

On the whole, the Turanian character of the Parthians, though not absolutely proved, appears to be in the highest degree probable. If it be accepted, we must regard them as in race closely allied to the vast hordes which from a remote antiquity have roamed over the steppe region of Upper Asia, from time to time bursting upon the south, and harassing or subjugating the comparatively unwarlike inhabitants of the warmer countries. We must view them as the congeners of the Huns, Bulgarians, and Comans of the ancient world; of the Kalmucks, Ouigurs, Usbegs, Eleuts, &c., of the present day. Perhaps their nearest representatives will be, if we look to their primitive condition at the founding of their empire, the modern Turkomans, who occupy nearly the same districts; if we regard them in the period of their great prosperity, the Osmanli Turks. Like the Turks, they combined great military prowess and vigour with a capacity for organisation and government not very usual among

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[1] *Lectures on Roman History*, vol. iii. p. 276; E. T.

[2] On the modern Tadjiks, the settled Iranian population of Bokhara and Kokand, see Vambéry's *Travels*, pp. 367, 381, &c.

Asiatics. Like them, they remained at heart barbarians, though they put on an external appearance of civilisation and refinement. Like them, they never to any extent amalgamated with the conquered races, but continued for centuries an exclusive dominant race, *encamped* in the countries which they had overrun.

The circumstances under which the Parthians became subjects of the Persian empire may readily be conjectured, but cannot be laid down positively. According to Diodorus, who probably followed Ctesias, they passed from the dominion of the Assyrians to that of the Medes, and from dependence upon the Medes to a similar position under the Persians.[1] But the balance of evidence is against these views. It is, on the whole, most probable that neither the Assyrian nor the Median empire extended so far eastward as the country of the Parthians.[2] The Parthians probably maintained their independence from the time of their settlement in the district called after their name until the sudden arrival in their country of the great Persian conqueror, Cyrus. This prince, as Herodotus tells us, subdued the whole of Western Asia, proceeding from nation to nation, and subjugating one people after another. The order of his conquests is not traceable; but it is clear that after his conquest of the Lydian empire (about B.C. 554), he proceeded eastward, with the special object of subduing Bactria.[3] To reach Bactria, he would have to pass through, or close by, Parthia. Since, as Herodotus says,[4] 'he conquered the whole way, as he went,' we

[1] Diod. Sic. ii. 2, § 3; 34, § 1 and § 6.

[2] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. pp. 234 and 428; 2nd ed.

[3] Herod. i. 153.

[4] Herod. i. 177. Τὰ μέν νυν κάτω τῆς Ἀσίης Ἅρπαγος ἀνάστατα ἐποίεε· τὰ δὲ ἄνω αὐτῆς αὐτὸς Κῦρος, πᾶν ἔθνος καταστρεφόμενος καὶ οὐδὲν παριείς.

may fairly conclude that on his road to Bactria he subjugated the Parthians. It was thus, almost certainly, that they lost their independence and became Persian subjects. Competent enough to maintain themselves against the comparatively small tribes in their near neighbourhood, the Chorasmians, Hyrcanians, Arians of Herat, Bactrians, and Sagartians, it was not possible for them to make an effectual resistance to a monarch who brought against them the entire force of a mighty empire. Cyrus had, it is probable, little difficulty in obtaining their submission. It is possible that they resisted; but perhaps it is more probable that their course on this occasion was similar to that which they pursued when the Macedonian conqueror swept across these same regions. The Parthians at that period submitted without striking a blow.[1] There is no reason to believe that they caused any greater trouble to Cyrus.

When the Persian empire was organised by Darius Hystaspis into satrapies, Parthia was at first united in the same government with Chorasmia, Sogdiana, and Aria.[2] Subsequently, however, when satrapies were made more numerous, it was detached from these extensive countries, and made to form a distinct government, with the mere addition of the comparatively small district of Hyrcania.[3] It formed, apparently, one of the most tractable and submissive of the Persian provinces. Except on the single occasion already noticed,[4] when it took part in a revolt that extended to nearly one-half the empire,[5] it gave its rulers

[1] Arrian, *Exp. Al.* iii. 25; Q. Curt. *Hist. Al.* vi. 2.

[2] Herod. iii. 93.

[3] Strab. xi. 9, § 1. Συνετέλει μετὰ τῶν Ὑρκανῶν κατὰ τὰ Περσικά.

[4] Supra, p. 15.

[5] *Behist. Ins.* col. ii. par. 2. Compare *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. pp. 411-413; 2nd ed.

no trouble; no second attempt was made to shake off the alien yoke, which may indeed have galled, but which was felt to be inevitable. In the final struggle of Persia against Alexander, the Parthians were faithful to their masters. They fought on the Persian side at Arbela;[1] and though they submitted to Alexander somewhat tamely when he invaded their country, yet, as Darius was then dead, and no successor had declared himself, they cannot be taxed with desertion. Probably they felt little interest in the event of the struggle. Habit and circumstance caused them to send their contingent to Arbela at the call of the Great King; but when the Persian cause was evidently lost, they felt it needless to make further sacrifices. Having no hope of establishing their independence, they thought it unnecessary to prolong the contest. They might not gain, but they could scarcely lose, by a change of masters.

[1] Arrian, iii. 8; Q. Curt. iv. 12.

CHAPTER III.

Condition of Western Asia under the earlier Seleucidæ. Revolts of Bactria and Parthia. Conflicting accounts of the establishment of the Parthian Kingdom. First War with Syria.

Τὸ ἔθνος Μακεδόνων ἀπέστησαν, καὶ καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ἦρξαν, καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα δυνάμεως ἦλασαν.—Arrian, Fr. 1.

THE attempt of Alexander the Great to unite the whole civilised world in a single vast empire might perhaps have been a success if the mind which conceived the end, and which had to a considerable extent elaborated the means, had been spared to watch over its own work, and conduct it past the perilous period of infancy and adolescence. But the premature decease of the great Macedonian in the thirty-third year of his age, when his plans of fusion and amalgamation were only just beginning to develop themselves, and the unfortunate fact that among his 'Successors' there was not one who inherited either his grandeur of conception or his powers of execution, caused his scheme at once to collapse; and the effort to unite and consolidate led only to division and disintegration. In lieu of Europe being fused with Asia, Asia itself was split up. For nearly a thousand years, from the formation of the great Assyrian empire to the death of Darius Codomannus, Western Asia, from the Mediterranean to Affghanistan, or even to India, had been united under one head, had acknowledged one sovereign. Assyria, Media, Persia, had successively held the position of dominant power; and the last of the three had given union, and

consequently peace, to a wider stretch of country and a vaster diversity of peoples than either of her predecessors. Under the mild yoke of the Achæmenian princes had been held together for two centuries, not only all the nations of Western Asia, from the Indian and Thibetan deserts to the Ægean and the Mediterranean, but a great part of Africa also, that is to say, Egypt, north-eastern Libya, and the Greek settlements of Cyrene and Barca. The practical effect of the conquests of Alexander was to break up this unity, to introduce in the place of a single consolidated empire, a multitude of separate and contending kingdoms. The result was thus the direct opposite of the great conqueror's design, and forms a remarkable instance of the contradiction which so often subsists between the propositions of man and the dispositions of an overruling Providence.

The struggle for power which broke out almost immediately after his death among the successors of Alexander may be regarded as having been brought to a close by the battle of Ipsus. The period of fermentation was then concluded, and something like a settled condition of things brought about. A quadripartite division of Alexander's dominions was recognised, Macedonia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Syria (or south-western Asia) becoming thenceforth distinct political entities. Asia Minor, the kingdom of Lysimachus, had indeed less of unity than the other three states. It was already disintegrated, the kingdoms of Bithynia, Pontus, and Cappadocia, subsisting side by side with that of Lysimachus, which was thus limited to western and south-western Asia Minor. After the death of Lysimachus further changes occurred; but the state of Pergamus, which sprang up at this time, may be regarded as the

continuation of Lysimachus's kingdom, and as constituting from the time of Eumenes I. (B.C. 263) a fourth power in the various political movements and combinations of the Græco-Oriental world.

Of the four powers thus established, the most important, and that with which we are here especially concerned, was the kingdom of Syria (as it was called), or that ruled for 247 years by the Seleucidæ. Seleucus Nicator, the founder of this kingdom, was one of Alexander's officers, but served without much distinction through the various campaigns by which the conquest of the East was effected.[1] At the first distribution of provinces (B.C. 323) among Alexander's generals after his death, he received no share;[2] and it was not until B.C. 320, when upon the death of Perdiccas a fresh distribution was made at Triparadisus, that his merits were recognised, and he was given the satrapy of Babylon.[3] In this position he acquired a character for mildness and liberality, and made himself generally beloved, both by his soldiers and by those who were under his government.[4] In the struggle between Antigonus and Eumenes (B.C. 317–316), he embraced the side of the former, and did him some good service; but this, instead of evoking gratitude, appears to have only roused in Antigonus a spirit of jealousy. The ambitious aspirant after universal dominion, seeing in the popular satrap a possible, and far from a contemptible, rival, thought it politic to sweep him out of his way; and the career of Seleucus would have been cut short, had he not perceived his peril in time, and by a precipitate flight secured his safety. Accompanied by

[1] Seleucus is rarely mentioned by Arrian. His name occurs only in v. 13, 16; vii. 4 and 26.

[2] See Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. vii. pp. 139, 140; Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. viii. p. 517.

[3] Thirlwall, vol. vii. p. 245.

[4] Ibid. p. 308.

a body of no more than fifty horsemen, he took the road for Egypt, escaped the pursuit of a detachment sent to overtake him, and threw himself on the protection of Ptolemy.

This event, untoward in appearance, proved the turning-point in Seleucus's fortunes. It threw him into irreconcilable hostility with Antigonus, while it brought him forward before the eyes of men as one whom Antigonus feared. It gave him an opportunity of showing his military talents in the West, and of obtaining favour with Ptolemy, and with all those by whom Antigonus was dreaded. When the great struggle came between the confederate monarchs and the aspirant after universal dominion, it placed him on the side of the allies. Having recovered Babylon (B.C. 312), Seleucus led the flower of the eastern provinces to the field of Ipsus (B.C. 301), and contributed largely to the victory, thus winning himself a position among the foremost potentates of the day. By the terms of the agreement made after Ipsus, Seleucus was recognised as monarch of all the Greek conquests in Asia, with the sole exceptions of Lower Syria and Asia Minor.[1]

The monarchy thus established extended from the Holy Land and the Mediterranean on the west, to the Indus valley and the Bolor mountain-chain upon the east, and from the Caspian and Jaxartes towards the north, to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean towards the south. It comprised Upper Syria, Mesopotamia, parts of Cappadocia and Phrygia, Armenia,[2] Assyria,

[1] Thirlwall, vol. vii. p. 401; Grote, vol. viii. p. 576.

[2] Bishop Thirlwall notes that Armenia, shortly before the battle of Ipsus, was independent under Ardoates, a native king (vol. vii. p. 402, and compare Diod. Sic. xxxi. 19, § 5), and suggests that after Ipsus Seleucus was too much engaged with other affairs to bring Armenia under. But either Seleucus or one of his early successors must have reconquered Armenia, for it did not permanently establish its independence till B.C. 190. (Strab. xi. 14, § 5.)

Media, Babylonia, Susiana, Persia, Carmania, Sagartia, Hyrcania, Parthia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Zarangia, Arachosia, Sacastana, Gedrosia, and probably some part of India.[1] Its entire area could not have been much less than 1,200,000 square miles. Of these, some 300,000 or 400,000 may have been desert; but the remainder was generally fertile, and comprised within its limits some of the very most productive regions in the whole world. The Mesopotamian lowland, the Orontes valley, the tract between the Caspian and the mountains, the regions about Merv and Balkh, were among the richest in Asia, and produced grain and fruits in incredible abundance. The rich pastures of Media and Armenia furnished excellent horses. Bactria gave an inexhaustible supply of camels. Elephants in large numbers were readily procurable from India.[2] Gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, tin, were furnished by several of the provinces, and precious stones of various kinds abounded.[3] Moreover, for above ten centuries, the precious metals and the most valuable kinds of merchandise had flowed from every quarter into the region; and though the Macedonians may have carried off, or wasted, a considerable quantity of both, yet the accumulations of ages withstood the drain, and the hoarded wealth which had come down from Assyrian, Babylonian, and Median times was to be found in the days of Seleucus chiefly within the limits of his Empire.

The situation which nature pointed out as most suitable for the capital of a kingdom having the exten-

[1] Its limits eastward are somewhat doubtful. Seleucus appears to have ceded a portion, at any rate, of his Indian possessions to Sandracottus before Ipsus. (Thirlwall, vol. vii. p. 395.)

[2] Sandracottus presented Seleucus with 500 of these animals (Strab. xv. 2, § 9). They were largely used both by him and by his successors in their wars.

[3] See, for details of the localities, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. pp. 158–162, 2nd edit.

sion that has been here indicated, was some portion of the Mesopotamian valley, which was at once central and fertile. The empire of Seleucus might have been conveniently ruled from the site of the ancient Nineveh, or from either of the two still existing and still flourishing cities of Susa and Babylon. The impetus given to commerce by the circumstances of the time[1] rendered a site near the sea preferable to one so remote as that of Nineveh, and the same consideration made a position on the Tigris or Euphrates more advantageous than one upon a smaller river. So far, all pointed to Babylon as the natural and best metropolis; and it was further in favour of that place that its merits had struck the Great Conqueror, who had designed to make it the capital of his own still vaster Empire.[2] Accordingly Babylon was Seleucus's first choice; and there his Court was held for some years previously to his march against Antigonus. But either certain disadvantages were found to attach to Babylon as a residence, or the mere love of variety and change caused him very shortly to repent of his selection, and to transfer his capital to another site. He founded, and built with great rapidity, the city of Seleucia upon the Tigris,[3] at the distance of about forty miles from Babylon, and had transferred thither the seat of government even before B.C. 301. Thus far, however, no fault had been committed. The second capital was at least as conveniently placed as the first, and would have served equally well as a centre from which to govern the

[1] Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. vii. p. 120.

[2] This is rather indicated by the pains which he took to improve Babylon (Arr. *Exp. Al.* vii. 17, 19, 21) than distinctly declared by any important authorities. It has been recognised as tolerably certain by several modern writers. (See Dr. Smith's *Dict. of Biography*, vol. i. p. 122, &c.)

[3] Strab. xvi. 1, § 5; Plin. *H. N.* vi. 26.

Empire. But after Ipsus a further change was made—a change that was injudicious in the extreme. Either setting undue store by his newly-acquired western provinces, or over-anxious to keep close watch on his powerful neighbours in those parts, Lysimachus and Ptolemy, Seleucus once more transferred the seat of empire, exchanging this time the valley of the Tigris for that of the Orontes, and the central position of Lower Mesopotamia for almost the extreme western point of his vast territories. Antioch arose in extraordinary beauty and magnificence during the first few years that succeeded Ipsus, and Seleucus in a short time made it his ordinary residence.[1] The change weakened the ties which bound the Empire together, offended the bulk of the Asiatics, who saw their monarch withdraw from them into a remote region, and particularly loosened the grasp of the government on those more eastern districts which were at once furthest from the new metropolis and least assimilated to the Hellenic character. Among the causes which led to the disintegration of the Seleucid kingdom, there is none that deserves so well to be considered the main cause as this. It was calculated at once to produce the desire to revolt, and to render the reduction of revolted provinces difficult, if not impossible.

The evil day, however, might have been indefinitely delayed had the Seleucid princes either established and maintained through their Empire a vigorous and effective administration, or abstained from entangling themselves in wars with their neighbours in the West, the Ptolemies and the princes of Asia Minor.

But the organisation of the Empire was unsatisfactory. Instead of pursuing the system inaugurated by

[1] Strab. xvi. 2, § 4.

Alexander and seeking to weld the heterogeneous elements of which his kingdom was composed into a homogeneous whole, instead of at once conciliating and elevating the Asiatics by uniting them with the Macedonians and the Greeks, by promoting intermarriage and social intercourse between the two classes of his subjects, educating the Asiatics in Greek ideas and Greek schools, opening his court to them, promoting them to high employments, making them feel that they were as much valued and as well cared for as the people of the conquering race,[1] the first Seleucus, and after him his successors, fell back upon the old simpler, ruder system, the system pursued before Alexander's time by the Persians, and before them perhaps by the Medes—the system most congenial to human laziness and human pride—that of governing a nation of slaves by means of a class of victorious aliens. Seleucus divided his empire into satrapies, seventy-two in number. He bestowed the office of satrap on none but Macedonians and Greeks. The standing army, by which he maintained his authority, was indeed composed in the main of Asiatics, disciplined after the Greek model; but it was officered entirely by men of Greek or Macedonian parentage. Nothing was done to keep up the self-respect of the Asiatics, or to soften the unpleasantness that must always attach to being governed by foreigners. Even the superintendence over the satraps seems to have been insufficient. According to some writers, it was a gross outrage offered by a satrap to an Asiatic subject that stirred up the Parthians to their revolt.[2] The story may not be true; but its currency shows of what conduct towards those under their government

[1] On the views and intentions of Alexander, see the excellent remarks of Bishop Thirlwall (*Hist. of Greece*, vol. vii. pp. 119–125).

[2] See below, p. 43.

the satraps of the Seleucidæ were thought, by such as lived near the time, to have been capable.

It would, perhaps, have been difficult for the Seleucid princes, even had they desired it, to pursue a policy of absolute abstention in the wars of their western neighbours. So long as they were resolute to maintain their footing on the right bank of the Euphrates, in Phrygia, Cappadocia, and Upper Syria, they were of necessity mixed up with the quarrels of the west. Could they have been content to withdraw within the Euphrates, they might have remained for the most part clear of such entanglements; but even then there would have been occasions when they must have taken the field in self-defence. As it was, however, the idea of abstention seems never to have occurred to them. It was the fond dream of each 'Successor' of Alexander that in his person might, perhaps, be one day united all the territories of the great Conqueror. Seleucus would have felt that he sacrificed his most cherished hopes if he had allowed the west to go its own way, and had contented himself with consolidating a great power in the regions east of the Euphrates.

And the policy of the founder of the house was followed by his successors. The three Seleucid sovereigns who reigned prior to the Parthian revolt were, one and all, engaged in frequent, if not continual, wars with the monarchs of Egypt and Asia Minor. The first Seleucus, by his claim to the sovereignty of Lower Syria, established a ground of constant contention with the Ptolemies;[1] and though he did not prosecute the claim to the extent of actual hostility, yet in the reign of his son, Antiochus I., called Soter, the smothered quarrel broke out. Soter fomented the discontent of

[1] Diod. Sic. xxi. 5.

Cyrene with its subjection to Egypt,[1] and made at least one expedition against Ptolemy Philadelphus in person (B.C. 264). His efforts did not meet with much success; but they were renewed by his son, Antiochus II., surnamed 'the God' (Θεός), who warred with Philadelphus from B.C. 260 to B.C. 250, contending with him chiefly in Asia Minor.[2] These wars were complicated with others. The first Antiochus aimed at adding the kingdom of Bithynia to his dominions, and attacked successively the Bithynian monarchs, Zipœtas[3] and Nicomedes I. (B.C. 280–278).[4] This aggression brought him into collision with the Gauls, whom Nicomedes called to his aid, and with whom Antiochus had several struggles, some successful and some disastrous.[5] He also attacked Eumenes of Pergamus (B.C. 263), but was defeated in a pitched battle near Sardis.[6] The second Antiochus was not engaged in so great a multiplicity of contests; but we hear of his taking a part in the internal affairs of Miletus,[7] and expelling a certain Timarchus, who had made himself tyrant of that city. There is also some ground for thinking that he had a standing quarrel with the king of Media Atropatene.[8] Altogether it is evident that from B.C. 280 to B.C. 250 the Seleucid princes were incessantly occupied with wars in the west, in Asia Minor and in Syria Proper, wars which so constantly engaged them that they had neither time nor attention to spare for the affairs of the far east. So long as the Bactrian and Parthian satraps

[1] Pausan. i. 7, § 3.

[2] On this war, see Niebuhr, *Lectures on Anct. History*, vol. iii. p. 286, E.T.

[3] Memnon, *De rebus Heracl.* xx. 3.

[4] Ibid. xvi.

[5] Antiochus I. obtained his name of *Soter* (Saviour) from a victory over the Gauls (Appian, *Syriaca*, p. 130, C.) He was slain in a battle against the same enemy (Phylarch. ap. Plin. *H. N.* viii. 42; Ælian, *H. An.* vi. 44).

[6] Strab. xiii. 4, § 2.

[7] Appian, *Syr.* p. 130, D.

[8] Strab. xi. 9, § 2.

paid their tributes, and supplied the requisite quotas of troops for service in the western wars, the Antiochi were content. The satraps were left to manage affairs at their own discretion; and it is not surprising that the absence of a controlling hand led to various complications and disorders.

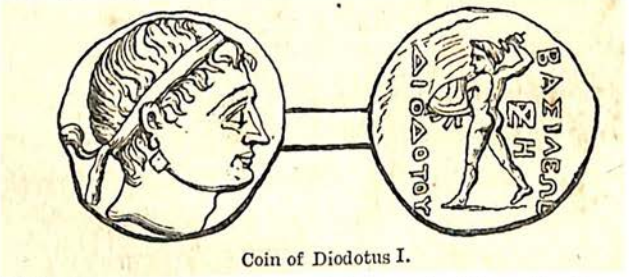
Moreover, the personal character of the second Antiochus must be taken into account. The vanity and impiety, which could accept the name of 'Theus' for a service that fifty other Greeks had rendered to oppressed towns without regarding themselves as having done anything very remarkable,[1] would alone indicate a weak and contemptible *morale*, and might justify us, did we know no more, in regarding the calamities of his reign as the fruit of his own unfitness to rule an empire. But there is sufficient evidence that he had other, and worse, vices. He was noted, even among Asiatic sovereigns, for luxury and debauchery; he neglected all state affairs in the pursuit of pleasure; his wives and male favourites were allowed to rule his kingdom at their will; and their most flagrant crimes were neither restrained nor punished.[2] Such a character could have inspired neither respect nor fear. The satraps, to whom the conduct of their sovereign could not but become known, would be partly encouraged to follow the bad example, partly provoked by it to shake themselves free of so hateful and yet contemptible a master.

It was, probably, about the year B.C. 256, the fifth of the second Antiochus, when that prince, hard pressed by Philadelphus in the west, was also, perhaps, engaged in a war with the king of Atropatene in the north, that

[1] The title was conferred by the Milesians on the expulsion of Timarchus. (See above, note [5] on p. 38.)

[2] See Niebuhr's *Lectures*, vol. iii. pp. 286, 287; and compare Athen. *Deipnosoph.* ii. p. 45; x. p. 438; Hieronym. *ad Dan.* xi. &c.

the standard of revolt was first actually raised in the eastern provinces, and a Syrian satrap ventured to declare himself an independent sovereign. This was Diodotus,[1] satrap of Bactria, a Greek, as his name shows. Suddenly assuming the state and style of king, he issued coins stamped with his own name, and established himself without difficulty as sovereign over the large and flourishing province of Bactria,[2] or the tract of fertile land about the upper and middle Oxus. This district had from a remote antiquity been one with special pretensions. The country was fertile, and much of it strong; the people were hardy and valiant;[3] they were generally treated with exceptional favour by the Persian monarchs;[4] and they seem to have had traditions which assigned them a preeminence among the Arian tribes at some indefinitely distant period.[5]



Coin of Diodotus I.

[1] Justin gives the name as Theodotus (Justin, xli. 4); but Diodotus, which is the form used by Strabo (xi. 9, § 3), appears upon the Bactrian coins (Lassen, *Indische Alterthumsk.* vol. ii. p. 284; *Num. Chr.* New Series, vol. viii. p. 278).

[2] Justin's 'thousand Bactrian cities' (xli. 1) are no doubt an exaggeration, but they indicate a truth—that the country was populous and flourishing.

[3] The Bactrians were among the nations selected by Mardonius to continue the struggle with the Greeks when the bulk of Xerxes' army returned home (Herod. viii. 113). They fought well at Arbela (Arr. *Exp. Al.* iii. 13; Q. Curt. iv. 15, § 18), and offered a strenuous resistance to Alexander (Arr. iv. 1–22).

[4] Bactria was made generally a sort of royal appanage. It was conferred by Cyrus on his second son, Smerdis (Ctes. *Exc. Pers.* § 8). In the reign of Xerxes it was first held by his brother, Masistes (Herod. ix. 113), and afterwards by another brother, Hystaspes (Diod. Sic. xi. 69).

[5] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. p. 380, 2nd edit.

We may presume that they would gladly support the bold enterprise of their new monarch; they would feel their vanity flattered by the establishment of an independent Bactria, even though it were under Greek kings; and they would energetically second him in an enterprise which gratified their pride, while it held out to them hopes of a career of conquest, with its concomitants of plunder and glory. The settled quiet which they had enjoyed under the Achæmenidæ and the Seleucidæ was probably not much to their taste; and they would gladly exchange so tame and dull a life for the pleasures of independence and the chances of empire.

It would seem that Antiochus, sunk in luxury at his capital, could not bring himself to make even an effort to check the spirit of rebellion, and recover his revolted subjects. Bactria was allowed to establish itself as an independent monarchy, without having to undergo the ordeal of a bloody struggle. Antiochus neither marched against Diodotus in person, nor sent a general to contend with him. The authority of Diodotus was confirmed and riveted on his subjects by an undisturbed reign of eighteen years before a Syrian army even showed itself in his neighbourhood.

The precedent of successful revolt thus set could not well be barren of consequences. If one province might throw off the yoke of its feudal lord with impunity, why might not others? Accordingly, within a few years the example set by Bactria was followed in the neighbouring country of Parthia, but with certain very important differences. In Bactria the Greek satrap took the lead, and the Bactrian kingdom was, at any rate at its commencement, as thoroughly Greek as that of the Seleucidæ. But in Parthia Greek

rule was from the first cast aside. The natives rebelled against their masters. An Asiatic race of a rude and uncivilized type, coarse and savage, but brave and freedom-loving, rose up against the polished but effeminate Greeks who held them in subjection, and claimed and established their independence. The Parthian kingdom was thoroughly anti-Hellenic.[1] It appealed to patriotic feelings, and to the hate universally felt towards the stranger. It set itself to undo the work of Alexander, to cast out the Europeans, to recover to the Asiatics the possession of Asia. It was naturally almost as hostile to Bactria as to Syria, although danger from a common enemy might cause it sometimes to make a temporary alliance with that kingdom. It had, no doubt, the general sympathy of the populations in the adjacent countries, and represented to them the cause of freedom and autonomy.

The exact circumstances under which the Parthian revolt took place are involved in much obscurity. According to one account the leader of the revolt, Arsaces, was a Bactrian, to whom the success of Diodotus was disagreeable, and who therefore quitted the newly-founded kingdom, and betook himself to Parthia, where he induced the natives to revolt and to accept him for their monarch.[2] Another account, which is attractive from the minute details into which it enters, is the following:—'Arsaces and Tiridates were brothers, descendants of Phriapites, the son of

[1] It is true that the Parthians used the Greek language on their coins and for inscriptions, and also that some of their kings took the title of Φιλέλλην. Still I believe the statement in the text to be a correct one. It applies *especially* to the early kingdom—from B.C. 250 to B.C. 127.

[2] Strabo (xi. 9, § 3) mentions this view, but implies his own dissent from it.

Arsaces. Pherecles, who had been made satrap of their country by Antiochus Theus, offered a gross insult to one of them, whereupon, as they could not brook the indignity, they took five men into counsel, and with their aid slew the insolent one. They then induced their nation to revolt from the Macedonians and set up a government of their own, which attained to great power.'[1] A third version says that the Arsaces, whom all represent as the first king, was in reality a Scythian, who at the head of a body of Parnian Dahæ, nomads inhabiting the valley of the Attrek (Ochus), invaded Parthia, soon after the establishment of Bactrian independence, and succeeded in making himself master of it.[2] With this account, which Strabo seems to prefer, agrees tolerably well that of Justin, who says[3] that 'Arsaces, having been long accustomed to live by robbery and rapine, attacked the Parthians with a predatory band, killed their satrap, Andragoras, and seized the supreme authority.' As there was in all probability a close ethnic connection between the Dahæ and the Parthians,[4] it would be likely enough that the latter might accept for king a chieftain of the former, who had boldly entered their country, challenged the Greek satrap to an encounter, and by defeating and killing him, freed them—at any rate for the time—from the Greek yoke. An oppressed people gladly adopts as chief the head of an allied tribe, if he has shown skill and daring, and offers to protect them from their oppressors.

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[1] Arr. Fr. 1. Compare Syncell. p. 284, B, and Zosimus, i. 18. The latter says. *Ἀρσάκης ὁ Παρθυαῖος, διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Τηριδάτην ὕβριν ἀγανακτήσας, πόλεμον πρὸς τὸν Ἀντιόχου σατράπην ἀράμενος, αἰτίαν ἔδωκε τοῖς Παρθυαίοις ἐκβαλοῦσι Μακέδονας, εἰς ἑαυτοὺς τὴν ἀρχὴν περιστῆσαι.*

[2] Strab. xi. 9, § 2.

[3] Justin, xli. 4.

[4] See above, p. 17.

The revolt of Arsaces has been placed by some as early as the year B.C. 256.[1] The Bactrian revolt is assigned by most historians to that year;[2] and the Parthian, according to some,[3] was contemporary. The best authorities, however, give a short interval between the two insurrections;[4] and, on the whole, there is perhaps reason to regard the Parthian independence as dating from about B.C. 250.[5] This year was the eleventh of Antiochus Theus, and fell into the time when he was still engaged in his war with Ptolemy Philadelphus. It might have been expected that when he concluded a peace with the Egyptian monarch in B.C. 249, he would have turned his arms at once towards the east, and have attempted at any rate the recovery of his lost dominions. But, as already stated,[6] his personal character was weak, and

[1] Frölich, Annales Regum Syriæ, p. 26; Heeren, *Manual of Ancient History*, p. 299, E.T. Mr. P. Smith (*Ancient History*, vol. ii. p. 92), and Mr. Lindsay (*History and Coinage of the Parthians*, p. 4), taking the later part of the same Olympic year, make the Bactrian kingdom to have been founded in B.C. 255.

Major Cunningham has recently argued for the low date of B.C. 246 (*Num. Chron.* New Series, vol. viii. pp. 261–265); by which the Bactrian revolt is made to fall four years later than the Parthian. But Strabo, whom he confesses to be the main authority, is clear that Bactria set the example of revolt, which Parthia followed (*Geograph.* xi. 9, § 2 and § 3).

[2] See Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, p. 216, note 1.

[3] Justin says, after speaking of the Parthian revolt: '*Eodem tempore* etiam Theodotus, mille urbium Bactrianarum præfectus, defecit' (xli. 4).

[4] Strabo says: Πρῶτον μὲν τὴν Βακτριανὴν ἀπέστησαν οἱ πεπιστευμένοι . . . ἔπειτ' Ἀρσάκης . . . ἐπῆλθεν ἐπὶ τὴν Παρθυαίαν καὶ ἐκράτησεν αὐτῆς. This authority is followed by Droysen (*Geschichte des Hellenismus*, vol. ii. § 331), Lassen (*Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 284), Mr. P. Smith (*Ancient History*, vol. ii. pp. 91, 92), and most moderns.

[5] Justin places it in the consulship of L. Manlius Vulso and M. Atilius Regulus, which was B.C. 256. But *M.* Atilius is probably an error for *C.* Atilius, who was consul with L. Manlius Vulso in B.C. 250. Eusebius distinctly places the revolt of the Parthians in this year (*Chron. Can.* ii. p. 352); and Moses of Chorene exactly agrees, when he assigns it to the *eleventh* year of Antiochus Theus. (*Hist. Armen.* ii. 1, *ad fin.*) Compare Samuel Aniens. *Sum. Temp.* i. 7, § 13.

[6] See above, p. 39.

he preferred the pleasures of repose at Antioch to the hardships of a campaign in the Caspian region. So far as we hear, he took no steps to re-establish his authority; and Arsaces, like Diodotus, was left undisturbed to consolidate his power at his leisure.

Arsaces lived, however, but a short time after obtaining the crown. His authority was disputed within the limits of Parthia itself; and he had to engage in hostilities with a portion of his own subjects.[1] We may suspect that the malcontents were chiefly, if not solely, those of Greek race, who may have been tolerably numerous, and whose strength would lie in the towns. Hecatompylos, the chief city of Parthia, was among the colonies founded by Alexander;[2] and its inhabitants would naturally be disinclined to acquiesce in the rule of a 'barbarian.' Within little more than two years of his coronation, Arsaces, who had never been able to give his kingdom peace, was killed in battle by a spear-thrust in the side;[3] and was succeeded (B.C. 247) by his brother, having left, it is probable, no sons, or none of mature age.

Tiridates, the successor of Arsaces, took upon his accession his brother's name, and is known in history as Arsaces II. The practice thus begun passed into a custom,[4] each Parthian monarch from henceforth bearing *as king* the name of Arsaces in addition to his own real appellation, whatever that might be. In the native remains the assumed name almost supersedes

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[1] Strab. xi. 9, § 2. Κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν οὖν ἀσθενὴς ἦν διαπολεμῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἀφαιρεθέντας τὴν χώραν.

[2] Q. Curt. vi. 2.

[3] Suidas ad voc. Ἀρσάκης. Syncellus indicates that his death was violent (vol. i. p. 540).

[4] See Justin, xli. 5; Strab. xv. 1, § 36; Mos. Chor. ii. 1; Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6, &c.

the other;[1] but, fortunately, the Greek and Roman writers who treat of Parthian affairs, have preserved the distinctive appellations, and thus saved the Parthian history from inextricable confusion. It is not easy to see from what quarter this practice was adopted;[2] perhaps we should regard it as one previously existing among the Dahan Scyths.

If the Parthian monarchy owed its origin to Arsaces I., it owed its consolidation and settled establishment to Arsaces II., or Tiridates. This prince, who had the good fortune to reign for above thirty years,[3] and who is confused by many writers[4] with the actual founder of the monarchy, having received Parthia from his brother, in the weak and unsettled condition above described, left it a united and powerful kingdom, enlarged in its boundaries, strengthened in its defences, in alliance with its nearest and most formidable neighbour, and triumphant over the great power of Syria, which had hoped to bring it once more into subjection. He ascended the throne, it is probable, early in B.C. 247, and had scarcely been monarch a couple of years when he witnessed one of those vast, but transient revolutions to which Asia is subject, but which are of rare occurrence in Europe. Ptolemy Euergetes, the son of Philadelphus, having succeeded to his father's kingdom in the same year

[1] All the Parthian coins bear the name of Arsaces. A few comparatively have the special name of the monarch in addition. (See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. ii. p. 252; Lindsay, *History of the Parthians*, pp. 134–163, and plates 1–10.) In the public documents also it would seem that the special designation of the monarch was omitted (Dio Cass. lxvi. 11).

[2] The practice is not that of the Ptolemies, who bore the name of Ptolemy as a family appellation, and took some further designation for distinction's sake.

[3] Syncellus (p. 284, B) says 37 years; but the synchronisms in the Parthian history scarcely allow so much.

[4] As by Justin, Ammianus (l.s.c.), and others.

with Tiridates, marched (in B.C. 245) a huge expedition into Asia, defeated Seleucus II. (Callinicus) in Syria, took Antioch, and then, having crossed the Euphrates, proceeded to bring the greater part of Western Asia under his sway. Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Susiana, Persia, Media, submitted to him. He went in person as far as Babylon, and, according to his own account,[1] was acknowledged as master by all the Eastern provinces to the very borders of Bactria. The Parthian and Bactrian kingdoms cannot but have trembled for their newly won independence. Here was a young warrior who, in a single campaign, had marched the distance of a thousand miles, from the banks of the Nile to those of the Lower Euphrates, without so much as receiving a check, and who was threatening to repeat the career of Alexander. What resistance could the little Parthian state hope to offer to such an enemy? It must have rejoiced Tiridates to hear that while the new conqueror was gathering somewhat too hastily the fruits of victory, collecting and despatching to Egypt the most valuable works of art that he could find in the cities which he had taken, and levying heavy contributions on the submitted countries, a revolt had broken out in his own land, to quell which he was compelled to retire suddenly and to relinquish the greater part of his acquisitions. Thus the threatened conquest proved a mere inroad, and instead of a power of greater strength replacing Syria in these regions, Syria practically retained her hold of them, but with enfeebled grasp, her strength crippled, her prestige lost, and her honour tarnished. Ptolemy had, it is probable, not retired

[1] See the inscription of Adule (Böckh, *Corp. Inscr. Gr.* vol. iii. p. 509).

very long, when, encouraged by what he had seen of Syria's weakness, Tiridates took the aggressive, and invading the neighbouring district of Hyrcania, succeeded in detaching it from the Syrian state, and adding it to his own territory.[1] This was throwing out a challenge which the Syrian monarch, Callinicus, could scarcely decline to meet, unless he was prepared to lose, one by one, all the outlying provinces of his Empire.

Accordingly in B.C. 237, having patched up a peace with his brother, Antiochus Hierax, the Syrian monarch made an expedition against Parthia. Not feeling, however, altogether confident of success if he trusted wholly to his own unaided efforts, he prudently entered into an alliance with Diodotus, the Bactrian king,[2] and the two agreed to combine their forces against Tiridates. Hereupon that monarch, impressed with a deep sense of the impending danger, quitted Parthia, and proceeding northwards, took refuge with the Aspasiacæ,[3] a Scythian tribe which dwelt between the Oxus and the Jaxartes.[4] The Aspasiacæ probably lent him troops; at any rate, he did not remain long in retirement, but, hearing that the

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[1] Justin, xli. 4. (On the situation and general character of Hyrcania, see ch. i. p. 12.)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Strab. xi. 8, § 8. Ἀρσάκης, τὸν Καλλίνικον φεύγων Σέλευκον εἰς τοὺς Ἀσπασιάκας ἐχώρησε. Major Cunningham places the flight of Tiridates in B.C. 246, the *first* year of Callinicus (*Num. Chron.* New Series, vol. ix. p. 33); but there seems to be no reason for supposing that that monarch threatened the eastern provinces until B.C. 237, his tenth year, nor any probability that Tiridates would desert his kingdom until the Syrian monarch actually made his expedition.

[4] On the character and geographical position of the Aspasiacæ, see Polyb. x. 47. This writer assigns them the whole region between the Oxus and the Tanais; but such an extension of their country can only have rested on conjecture. What Polybius *knew* was that they dwelt north of the Oxus, which they were in the habit of crossing to make raids into Hyrcania.

Bactrian king, whom he especially feared, was dead, he contrived to detach his son and successor from the Syrian alliance, and to draw him over to his own side: Having made this important stroke, he met Callinicus in battle, and completely defeated his army.[1]

This victory was with reason regarded by the Parthians as a sort of second beginning of their independence.[2] Hitherto their kingdom had existed precariously, and as it were by sufferance. It could not but be that the power from which they had revolted would one day seek to reclaim its lost territory; and, until the new monarchy had measured its strength against that of its former mistress, none could feel secure that it would be able to maintain its existence. The victory gained by Tiridates over Callinicus put an end to these doubts. It proved to the world at large,

[1] Justin, l.s.c.: 'Sed cito, morte Theodoti metu liberatus, cum filio ejus—et ipso Theodoto—fœdus ac pacem fecit; nec multo post cum Seleuco rege, ad defectores persequendos veniente, congressus victor fuit.' Major Cunningham concludes, on the strength of a fragment of Posidonius (ap. Athen. *Deipn.* iv. p. 153, A), that Seleucus was not only defeated by Tiridates, but made prisoner (*Num. Chron.* vol. ix. p. 34). But this would make Posidonius expressly contradict Justin, who says that Seleucus after his defeat was recalled to his own kingdom by fresh troubles. (See note [1] on the next chapter.) Others, as Vaillant, Clinton, and H. H. Wilson, have concluded from the fragment of Posidonius that Callinicus must have subsequently made a second expedition against the Parthians, and have then been made prisoner—an expedition of which the Posidonian fragment is the only trace. But it has been well pointed out by Mr. Bunbury that that fragment belongs to the history, not of Seleucus Callinicus, but of Seleucus, the eldest son of Antiochus Sidetes, who was taken prisoner by Phraates II. in B.C. 129 (*Dict. of Greek and Roman Biography*, vol. iii. p. 774). The *sixteenth* book of Posidonius, which contained the passage, treated of this period, and the passage itself, which speaks of a Syrian expedition against *Media*, is inappropriate to the time of Tiridates. The objection taken to Mr. Bunbury's view, that Seleucus is called 'king' in the passage, has no force. The word *βασιλεύς* is constantly applied to princes by the Greek writers; and, moreover, Seleucus, the eldest surviving son of Callinicus (Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 19), would have been *de jure* 'king' on his father's death.

[2] 'Velut initium libertatis.' (Justin, xli. 4, *ad fin.*)

and also to the Parthians themselves, that they had nothing to fear—that they were strong enough to preserve their freedom. Considering the enormous disproportion between the military strength and resources of the narrow Parthian State and the vast Syrian Empire—considering that the one comprised about fifty thousand and the other above a million of square miles;[1] that the one had inherited the wealth of ages and the other was probably as poor as any province in Asia; that the one possessed the Macedonian arms, training, and tactics, while the other knew only the rude warfare of the Steppes: the result of the struggle cannot but be regarded as surprising. Still it was not without precedent, and it has not been without repetition. It adds another to the many instances, where a small but brave people, bent on resisting foreign domination, have, when standing on their defence in their own territory, proved more than a match for the utmost force that a foe of overwhelming strength could bring against them. It reminds us of Marathon, of Bannockburn, of Morgarten. We may not sympathise wholly with the victors, for Greek civilisation, even of the type introduced by Alexander into Asia, was ill replaced by Tatar coarseness and barbarism; but we cannot refuse our admiration to the spectacle of a handful of gallant men determinedly resisting in the fastnesses of their native land a host of aliens, and triumphing over their would-be oppressors.

The Parthians themselves, deeply impressed with the importance of the contest, preserved the memory

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[1] See above, pp. 3 and 33. The conquest of Hyrcania may have raised the Parthian territory from 33,000 to 50,000 square miles.

of it by a solemn festival on the anniversary of their victory, which they still celebrated in the time of Trogus.[1]

[1] Justin, no doubt, reports the actual words of Trogus when he says (l.s.c.), 'quem diem Parthi exinde solennem, velut initium libertatis, *observant*.'

CHAPTER IV.

Consolidation of the Parthian Kingdom. Death of Tiridates and accession of Arsaces III. Attack on Media. War of Artabanus (Arsaces III.) with Antiochus the Great. Period of inaction. Great development of Bactrian power. Reigns of Priapatius (Arsaces IV.) and Phraates I. (Arsaces V.)

Κατ' ἀρχὰς ἀσθενὴς ἦν καὶ αὐτὸς (sc. Ἀρσάκης) καὶ οἱ διαδεξάμενοι ἐκεῖνον.
Strab. xi. 9, § 2.

SELEUCUS might perhaps not have accepted his defeat as final, had he been altogether free to choose whether he would continue the Parthian war or no. The resources of his Empire were so vast, his command of men and money so unbounded, that he could easily have replaced one army by another, and so have prolonged the struggle. But renewed troubles had broken out in the western portion of his dominions,[1] where his brother, Antiochus Hierax, was still in arms against his authority. Seleucus felt it necessary to turn his attention to this quarter, and having once retired from the Parthian contest, he never afterwards renewed it.[2] Tiridates was left unmolested, to act as he thought fit, and either to attempt further conquests, or to devote himself to securing those which he had effected. He chose the latter course, and during the remainder of his reign —a space of above twenty years—he employed himself wholly in strengthening and adorning his small kingdom. Having built a number of forts in various strong

[1] Justin, xli. 5. 'Revocato Seleuco novis motibus in Asiam.'

[2] See above, p. 49, note [1].

positions, and placed garrisons in them, he carefully selected a site for a new city, which he probably intended to make his capital. The spot chosen combined the advantages of being at once delightful and easily defensible. It was surrounded with precipitous rocks, which enclosed a plain of extraordinary fertility. Abundant wood and copious streams of water were in the neighbourhood. The soil was so rich that it scarcely required cultivation, and the woods were so full of game as to afford endless amusement to hunters.[1] To the town which he built in this locality, Tiridates gave the name of Dara, a word which the Greeks and Romans elongated into Dareium.[2] Unfortunately, modern travellers have not yet succeeded in identifying the site, which should, however, lie towards the East,[3] perhaps in the vicinity of Meshed.

We may presume that Tiridates, when he built this remarkable city, intended to make it the seat of government. Hecatompylos, as a Greek town, had the same disadvantages, which were considered in later times to render Seleucia unfit for the residence of the Parthian Court and monarch. Dara, like Ctesiphon, was to be wholly Parthian. Its strong situation would render it

[1] Justin, l.s.c. 'Dato laxamento, regnum Parthicum format, militem legit, castella munit, civitates firmat; urbem quoque nomine Daram in monte Zapaortenon condit; cujus loci ea conditio est, ut neque munitius quidquam esse, neque amœnius possit. Ita enim et præruptis rupibus undique cingitur, ut tutela loci nullis defensoribus egeat; et soli circumjacentis tanta ubertas est, ut propriis opibus expleatur. Jam fontium ac sylvarum ea copia est, ut et aquarum abundantia irrigetur, et venationum voluptatibus exornetur.'

[2] See Plin. *H. N.* vi. 16. The double resemblance of Apavortene (Zapavortene in one MS.) to Zapaortenon, and of Dareium to Dara, is enough to show that Pliny and Justin are speaking of the same locality. The description of Dareium in Pliny as 'fertilitatis inclutæ locus' is a confirmation, if one were needed.

[3] This emplacement depends especially on the identification of Justin's Zapaortenon with the Apavarctica of Isidore of Charax (*Mans. Parth.* § 13), which lay between Parthyene and Margiana.

easy of defence; its vicinity to forests abounding in game would give it special charms in the eyes of persons so much devoted, as the Parthian princes were, to the chase. But the intention of Tiridates, if we have truly divined it, failed of taking permanent effect. He may himself have fixed his abode at Dara, but his successors did not inherit his predilections; and Hecatompylos remained, after his reign, as before it, the head-quarters of the government, and the recognised metropolis of Parthia Proper.[1]

After passing in peace and prosperity the last twenty years of his reign, Tiridates died in a good old age, leaving his crown to a son, whose special name is a little uncertain, but who is called by most moderns,[2] Artabanus I.

Artabanus, having ascended the Parthian throne about B.C. 214, and being anxious to distinguish himself, took advantage of the war raging between Antiochus III., the second son of Seleucus Callinicus, and Achæus, one of his rebel satraps, to advance into Media, and to add to his dominions the entire tract between Hyrcania and the Zagros mountains. Of the manner in which he effected his conquests we have no account; but they seem to have been the fruit of a single campaign, which must have been conducted with great vigour and military skill. The Parthian prince appears to have occupied Ecbatana,[3] the ancient capital of the

[1] See Polyb. x. 28, § 7; Plin. *H. N.* vi. 15; Strab. xi. 9, § 1.

[2] See Vaillant, *Hist. Arsacid.* p. 16; Heeren, *Manual*, p. 300, E. T.; Plate in Smith's *Dict. of Gk. and Rom. Biography*, vol. i. p. 354; Lindsay, *History and Coinage of the Parthians*, p. 4; &c. Mr. Clinton questions the existence of any such king (*F. R.* vol. ii. p. 244, note e); but the name is given in the Epitome of Trogus Pompeius, and the actions are those wrongly assigned by Mr. Clinton to Tiridates.

[3] This is *implied* in the account of Polybius, especially in the fact recorded, that Antiochus, in re-occupying the place, *plundered* it (Polyb. x. 27, § 13).

Median Empire, and to have thence threatened the Mesopotamian countries. Upon receiving intelligence of his invasion, Antiochus levied a vast army,[1] and set out towards the East with a determination to subjugate all the revolted provinces, and to recover the limits of the old Empire of Nicator. Passing the Zagros chain, probably by way of Behistun and Kermanshaw,[2] he easily retook Ecbatana, which was an open town,[3] and undefended by the Parthians, and proceeded to prepare for a further advance eastward. The route from Ecbatana to the Caspian Gates crosses, of necessity, unless a considerable circuit be taken, some large tracts of barren ground, inlets or bays of the Great Salt Desert of Iran. Artabanus cherished the hope that here the difficulties of the way would effectually bar his enemy's progress, more especially as his troops were so numerous, and as water was scanty throughout the whole region. The streams which flow from Zagros towards the East are few and scanty; they mostly fail in summer, which, even in Asia, is the campaigning season; and those who cross the desert at this time must depend on the wells wherewith the more western part of the region is supplied by means of *kanats* or underground conduits,[4] which are sometimes carried many miles from the foot of the mountains. The position of the wells, which were few in number, was known only to the natives;[5] and Artabanus hoped that the Syrian monarch would be afraid to place the

[1] Justin (xli. 5) makes the number of his troops 100,000 foot and 20,000 horse, which is not at all an extravagant estimate.

[2] This is the easiest pass from Mesopotamia into Media, and the one which is open the earliest.

[3] Ἀτείχιστος. Polyb. x. 27, § 6.

[4] Ὑπόνομοι. Polyb. x. 28, § 2. On the extensive use of *kanats* in Persia, see above, p. 7.

[5] Polyb. (l.s.c.) Φρεατίας ἀγνοουμένας τοῖς ἀπείροις.

lives of his soldiers in such doubtful keeping. When, however, he found that Antiochus was not to be deterred by any fears of this kind, but was bent on crossing the desert, he had recourse to the barbaric expedients of filling in, or poisoning, the wells along the line of route which the Syrian prince was likely to follow.[1] But these steps seem to have been taken too late. Antiochus, advancing suddenly, caught some of the Parthian troops at their barbarous work, and dispersed them without difficulty.[2] He then rapidly effected the transit, and pressing forward, was soon in the enemy's country, where he occupied the chief city, Hecatompylos.[3]

Up to this point the Parthian monarch had declined an engagement. No information has come down to us as to his motives; but they may be readily enough conjectured. To draw an enemy far away from his resources, while retiring upon one's own; to entangle a numerous host among narrow passes and defiles; to decline battle when he offers it, and then to set upon him unawares, has always been the practice of weak mountain races when attacked by a more numerous foe It is often good policy in such a case even to yield the capital without a blow, and to retreat into a more difficult situation. The assailant must follow whithersoever his foe retires, or quit the country, leaving him unsubdued. Antiochus, aware of this necessity, and rendered confident of success by the evacuation of a situation so strong, and so suitable for the Parthian tactics as Hecatompylos,[4] after giving his army a short rest at the captured capital, set out in pursuit of Artabanus, who

[1] Polyb. x. 28, § 5. Compare the conduct of the European Scyths at the time of the invasion of their country by Darius (Herod. iv. 120).

[2] Polyb. x. 28, § 6.

[3] Ibid. § 7.

[4] Ibid. x. 29, § 1.

had withdrawn his forces towards Hyrcania. To reach the rich Hyrcanian valleys, he was forced to cross the main chain of the Elburz, which here attains an elevation of 7000 or 8000 feet. The route which his army had to follow was the channel of a winter-torrent,[1] obstructed with stones and trunks of trees, partly by nature, partly by the efforts of the inhabitants. The long and difficult ascent was disputed by the enemy the whole way, and something like a pitched battle was fought at the top; but Antiochus persevered, and, though his army must have suffered severely, descended into Hyrcania and captured several of the towns.[2] Here our main authority, Polybius, suddenly deserts us, and we can give no further account of the war beyond its general result—Artabanus and the Parthians remained unsubdued after a struggle which seems to have lasted some years; Artabanus himself displayed great valour;[3] and at length the Syrian monarch thought it best to conclude a peace with him, in which he acknowledged the Parthian independence. It is probable that he exacted in return a pledge that the Parthian monarch should lend him his assistance in the expedition which he was bent on conducting against Bactria;[4] but there is no actual proof that the conditions of peace contained this clause. We are left in doubt whether Artabanus stood aloof in the war which Antiochus waged with Euthydemus of

[1] Διὰ χαράδρας χειμάρρου. (Ib. x. 30, § 2.) The situation of the Parthian and Hyrcanian towns is, unfortunately, still so uncertain that it is impossible to follow the march of Antiochus upon the map. Hecatompylos probably lay between the Jaghetai and the Alatagh; and it was this latter chain which Antiochus had to cross in order to enter Hyrcania. Polybius calls it Mount Labus.

[2] As Tambraca and Syrinx.

[3] Justin, xli. 5: 'Adversus Antiochum Seleuci filium *mira virtute* pugnavit.'

[4] The expression used by Justin —'ad postremum in *societatem* ejus (sc. Antiochi) adsumptus est'— seems to imply something more than a mere peace.

Bactria immediately after the close of his Parthian campaigns, or whether he lent his aid to the attempt made to crush his neighbour. Perhaps, on the whole, it is most probable that, nominally, he was Antiochus' ally in the war, but that, practically, he gave him little help, having no wish to see Syria aggrandized.

At any rate, whether Euthydemus had to meet the attack of Syria only, or of Syria and Parthia in combination, the result was, that Bactria, like Parthia, proved strong enough to maintain her ground, and that the Syrian King, after a while, grew tired of the struggle, and consented to terms of accommodation.[1] The Bactrian monarchy, like the Parthian, came out of the contest unscathed—indeed we may go further, and say that the position of the two kingdoms was improved by the attacks made upon them. If a prince possessing the personal qualities that distinguished the third Antiochus, and justified that title of 'Great' which he derived from his Oriental expedition[2]—if such a prince, enjoying profound peace at home, and directing the whole force of his Empire against them, could not succeed in reducing to subjection the revolted provinces of the north-

[1] Polyb. xi. 34, § 9, 10. The terms were the following:—Euthydemus supplied Antiochus with provisions for his army, and surrendered to him all his elephants. Antiochus allowed Euthydemus to retain his government, and recognised his title of 'king.' A marriage was arranged between Demetrius, the eldest son of Euthydemus, and a daughter of Antiochus, probably not of marriageable age. Finally, an alliance, offensive and defensive (*συμμαχία*), was concluded between the two powers. These favourable terms were granted to the Bactrian monarch, chiefly on account of his representations that a strong Bactria was needed in order to keep in check the northern nomads, who were continually threatening an irruption, which, if it once took place, would barbarise the whole country. This is the first we hear of an aggressive attitude being assumed by the Scythic hordes across the Jaxartes.

[2] Appian, *Syriac.* p. 86 A. *Ἀντίοχος . . . ἐσβαλὼν ἐς Μηδίαν τε καὶ Παρθυήνην, καὶ ἕτερα ἔθνη ἀφιστάμενα ἔτι πρὸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλὰ δράσας, καὶ μέγας Ἀντίοχος ἐπικληθείς.* Compare Polyb. xi. 34, § 16.

east, but, whatever military advantages he might gain, found conquest impossible, and returned home, having acknowledged as independent kings those whom he went out to chastise as rebellious satraps, it was evident that the kingdoms might look upon themselves as firmly established, or, at least, as secure from the danger of re-absorption into the Syrian State. The repulse of Callinicus was a probable indication of the fate of all future efforts on the part of Syria to reduce Parthia: the conditions of peace granted by Antiochus to both countries, after a series of military successes, constituted almost a proof that the yoke of Syria would never be re-imposed on either the Parthian or the Bactrian nation.

With the departure of Antiochus from the East, about B.C. 206, we enter upon a period when Parthian history is, for a quarter of a century, almost a blank. Nothing more is known of Arsaces III. after Antiochus retired; and nothing at all is known of his successor, Priapatius, beyond his name and the length of his reign, which lasted for fifteen years [1] (from about B.C. 196 to 181). The reigns of these princes coincide with those of Euthydemus and his son, Demetrius, in Bactria; and perhaps the most probable solution of the problem of Parthian inactivity at this time is to be found in the great development of Bactrian power which now took place, and the influence which the two neighbouring kingdoms naturally exercised upon each other. When Parthia was strong and aggressive, Bactria was, for the most part, quiet; and when Bactria shows signs of vigorous and active life, Parthia languishes and retires into the shade.

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[1] Justin, xli. 5.

The Bactrian Kingdom, founded (as we have seen [1]) a little before the Parthian, sought from the first its aggrandisement in the East rather than in the West. The Empire of Alexander had included all the countries between the Caspian Sea and the Sutlej; and these tracts, which constitute the modern Khorasan, Affghanistan, and Punjaub, had all been to a certain extent Hellenised by means of Greek settlements [2] and Greek government. But Alexander was no sooner dead than a tendency displayed itself in these regions, and particularly in the more eastern ones, towards a relapse into barbarism, or, if this expression be too strong,[3] at any rate towards a rejection of Hellenism. During the early wars of the 'Successors' the natives of the Punjaub generally seized the opportunity to revolt; the governors placed over the various districts by Alexander were murdered; and the tribes everywhere declared themselves free. Among the leaders of the revolt was a certain Chandragupta (or Sandracottus), who contrived to turn the circumstances of the time to his own special advantage, and built up a considerable kingdom in the far East out of the fragments which had detached themselves from what was still called the Macedonian Empire.[4] When Seleucus Nicator, about B.C. 305, conducted an expedition across the Indus, he

[1] See above, p. 44.

[2] On the Greek cities founded by Alexander in Bactria, see Strabo, xi. 11, § 4; in Sogdiana, see Arrian, *Exp. Al.* iv. 3, ad fin.; in the Paropamisus, ib. iv. 22; on the Indus and its tributaries, Strab. xv. 2, § 9; Arrian, v. 19; vi. 15, 21, &c.

[3] That the Hindoo civilisation of the time was not altogether contemptible is shown by Lassen in the second book of his *Indische Alterthumskunde* (vol. ii. pp. 1–111).

[4] See especially the account of Justin, xv. 4, § 12–19. 'Transitum deinde in India fecit, quæ post mortem Alexandri, veluti cervicibus jugo servitutis excusso, præfectos ejus occiderat. Auctor libertatis Sandrocottus fuerat; sed titulum libertatis post victoriam in servitutem verterat; siquidem occupato regno, populum, quem ab externa dominatione vindicaverat, ipse servitio premebat.'

found this monarch established in the tract between the Indus and the Ganges,[1] ruling over extensive dominions and at the head of a vast force.[2] It is uncertain whether the two rivals engaged in hostilities or no.[3] At any rate, a peace was soon made; and Seleucus, in return for five hundred elephants, ceded to Sandracottus certain lands on the west bank of the Indus, which had hitherto been regarded as Macedonian.[4] These probably consisted of the low grounds between the Indus and the foot of the mountains—the districts of Peshawur, Bunnoo, Murwut, Shikarpoor, and Kurrachee—which are now in British occupation. Thus Hellenism in these parts receded more and more, the Sanskritic Indians recovering by degrees the power and independence of which they had been deprived by Alexander.

This state of things could not have been pleasing to the Greek princes of Bactria, who must have felt that the reaction towards barbarism in these parts tended to isolate them, and that there was a danger of their being crushed between the Parthians on the one hand and the perpetually advancing Indians on the other. When Antiochus the Great, after concluding his treaty with Euthydemus, marched eastward, the Bactrian monarch probably indulged in hopes that the Indians

[1] Palibothra, on the Ganges, is made the head of the kingdom of Sandracottus by Strabo, who follows the eye witness, Megasthenes (xv. 1, § 36). Plutarch (*Vit. Alex.* § 62) extends the Præsian Indians, over whom he ruled, to the 'Altars of Alexander,' which were on the Hyphasis, or Sutlej (Diod. Sic. xvii. 95, § 1). Seleucus must have come into contact with Sandracottus in the Punjaub region.

[2] Strabo (l.s.c.) gives as the amount of his force 400,000; Plutarch (l.s.c.), 600,000.

[3] Appian mentions hostilities (*τὸν Ἰνδὸν περάσας ἐπολέμησεν Ἀνδροκόττῳ βασιλεῖ τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ Ἰνδῶν. Syriac.* p. 123, B); but Strabo (xv. 2, § 9) and Justin (xv. 4, § 21) speak merely of an alliance.

[4] Strabo. l.s.c. Plutarch (*Vit. Alex.* § 62) mentions the elephants, but not the cession of territory.

would receive a check, and that the Greek frontier would be again carried to the Indus, if not to the Sutlej. But, if so, he was disappointed. Antiochus, instead of making war upon the Indians, contented himself with renewing the old alliance of the Seleucidæ with the *Maurja* princes,[1] and obtaining a number of elephants from Sophagesenus, the grandson of Sandracottus.[2] It is even possible that he went further, and made cessions of territory in return for this last gift,[3] which brought the Indian frontier still nearer than before to that of Bactria. At any rate, the result of the Indian expedition of Antiochus seems to have been unsatisfactory to Euthydemus, who shortly afterwards commenced what are called 'Indian Wars'[4] on his south-eastern frontier, employing in them chiefly the arms of his son, Demetrius. During the later years of Euthydemus, and the earlier ones of Demetrius, the Bactrian rule was rapidly extended over the greater portion of the modern Affghanistan;[5] nor did it even stop there. The arms of Demetrius were carried across the Indus into the Punjaub region;[6] and the city of Euthymedeia upon the Hydaspes remained to later times an evidence of the extent of his conquests.[7] From B.C. 206 to about B.C. 185 was the most flourishing period of the Bactrian

[1] On this dynastic appellation, see Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 196.

[2] Polyb. x. 34, § 11. Lassen has shown that Sophagesenus (*Subhagasena*) was probably a title of *Jaloka*, the son of *Asoka*, and grandson of *Chandragupta* (Sandracottus).

[3] So Wilson (*Ariana Antiqua*, p. 229); but I do not find any statement of the fact by any ancient writer.

[4] Strab. xi. 11, § 1.

[5] Demetrius is called by Justin 'King of the Indians' (xli. 6, § 4). He is reasonably regarded as the founder of the city called Demetrias in Arachosia (Isid. Char. § 19). His Indian conquests are attested by Strabo (l.s.c.)

[6] This has been questioned by Wilson (*Ar. Ant.* p. 230); but Lassen (*Ind. Alt.* vol. ii. p. 300) regards the evidence as, on the whole, conclusive.

[7] Ptol. *Geograph.* vii. 1; p. 171.

monarchy, which expanded during that space from a small kingdom into a considerable empire.[1]

The power and successes of the Bactrian princes at this time account sufficiently for the fact that the contemporary Parthian monarchs stood upon their guard, and undertook no great expeditions. Arsaces III., who continued on the throne for about ten or twelve years after his peace with Antiochus, and Priapatius, or Arsaces IV., his son, who succeeded him, and had a reign of fifteen years, were content, as already observed,[2] to watch over their own State, husbanding its resources, and living at peace with all their neighbours. It was not till Phraates I. (Arsaces V.), the son of Priapatius, had mounted the throne, B.C. 181, that this policy was departed from, and Parthia, which had remained tranquil for a quarter of a century, once more aroused herself, and assumed an attitude of aggression.

Coin of Phraates I.

The quarter to which Phraates I. directed his arms was the country of the Mardians, a poor but warlike people,[3] who appear to have occupied a portion of the Elburz range, probably that immediately south of Mazanderan and Asterabad.[4] The reduction of these

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[1] The coins of Euthydemus are found over a wide space, and show his empire to have included the provinces of Sogdiana, Bactria, Margiana, Aria, the Paropamisus, Drangiana, and Arachosia.

[2] See above, p. 59.

[3] Justin says, 'Phraates Mardos, validam gentem, bello domuit' (xli. 5). Arrian notes that at the time of Alexander they were 'poor' (πένητες), but 'brave in their penury' (μάχιμοι ἐπὶ τῇ πενίᾳ. *Exp. Al.* iii. 24).

[4] The position of the Mardians has been much disputed. I am induced to assign them this locality at this time from a consideration of Arrian (l.s.c.) compared with Strabo (xi. 8, § 1 and § 8).

fierce mountaineers is likely to have occupied him for some years, since their country was exceedingly strong and difficult.[1] Though the Mardi were (nominally, at any rate) subjects of the Seleucidæ, we do not hear of any assistance being rendered them, or, indeed, of any remonstrance being made against the unprovoked aggression of the Parthian monarch. The reign of Phraates I. in Parthia coincides with that of Seleucus IV. (Philopator) in Syria; and we may account for the inactivity of this prince, in part by his personal character, which was weak and pacific,[2] in part by the exhaustion of Syria at the time, in consequence of his father's great war with Rome (B.C. 197-190), and of the heavy contribution which was imposed upon him at the close of it. Syria may scarcely have yet recovered sufficient strength to enter upon a new struggle, especially one with a distant and powerful enemy. The material interests of the Empire may also have seemed to be but little touched by the war, since the Mardi were too poor to furnish much tribute; and it is possible, if not even probable, that their subjection to Syria had long been rather formal than real.[3] Seleucus therefore allowed the Mardians to be reduced, conceiving, probably, that their transfer to the dominion of the Arsacidæ neither increased the Parthian power nor diminished his own.

But the nation which submits to be robbed of a province, however unproductive and valueless, must look

[1] Arrian, l.s.c.; Q. Curt. *Hist. Alex.* vi. 5. The latter writer says: 'Interiora regionis ejus haud sane adire sine magna vexatione [Alexandri] exercitus poterat.' Juga montium, prærupta sylvæ, rupesque inviæ sepiunt.'

[2] Niebuhr, *Lectures on Ancient History*, vol. iii. p. 445, E. T.

[3] The Mardians were a robber tribe, whose allegiance to Persia had sat very lightly on them. They submitted to Alexander, but probably reverted soon after to their old condition.

to having the process repeated at intervals, until it bestirs itself and offers resistance. There is reason to believe that Phraates had no sooner conquered the Mardians than he cast his eyes on an adjacent district, and resolved to add it to his territories. This was the tract lying immediately to the west of the Caspian Gates, which was always reckoned to Media, forming, however, a distinct district, known as Media Rhagiana.[1] It was a region of much natural fertility, being watered by numerous streams from the Elburz range, and possessing a soil of remarkable productiveness.[2] Its breadth was not great, since it consisted of a mere strip between the mountains and the Salt Desert which occupies the whole centre of the Iranic table-land; but it extended in length at least a hundred and fifty miles, from the Caspian Gates to the vicinity of Kasvin. Its capital city, from a remote antiquity, was Rhages,[3] situated near the eastern extremity of the strip, probably at the spot now called *Kaleh Erij*,[4] about twenty-three miles from the 'Gates.' On this region it is clear that Phraates cast a covetous eye. How much of it he actually occupied is doubtful; but it is at least certain that he effected a lodgment in its eastern extremity,[5] which must have put the whole region in jeopardy. Nature has set a remarkable barrier between the more eastern and the more western portions of Occidental Asia,

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[1] Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 7. Compare Strab. xi. 13, § 7; Diod. Sic. xix. 44, § 5; Ptol. *Geogr.* vi. 2.

[2] See the descriptions of Fraser (*Khorasan*, pp. 287, 288), and Kinneir (*Persian Empire*, p. 119).

[3] Rhages appears in the Zendavesta under the form of *Ragha*. It is mentioned in the Behistun inscription (col. ii. par. 13), and in the Books of Tobit (i. 14; vi. 9) and Judith (i. 5).

[4] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. p. 273; 2nd ed.

[5] Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 7. Ἐντεῦθεν Ῥαγιανὴ Μηδία, ἐν ᾗ . . . Ῥάγα καὶ Χάραξ, ὧν μεγίστη τῶν κατὰ τὴν Μηδίαν ἡ Ῥάγα. Εἰς δὲ τὴν Χάρακα πρῶτος βασιλεὺς Φραάτης τοὺς Μάρδους ᾤκισεν.

about midway in the tract which lies due south of the Caspian Sea. The Elburz range in this part is one of so tremendous a character, and northward abuts so closely on the Caspian, that all communication between the east and the west necessarily passes to the south of it. In this quarter the Great Desert offering an insuperable obstacle to transit, the line of communication has to cling to the flanks of the mountain chain, the narrow strip between the mountains and the desert—rarely ten miles in width—being alone traversable. But about long. 52° 20′ this strip itself fails. A rocky spur runs due south from the Elburz into the desert for a distance of some twenty or thirty miles, breaking the line of communication, and seeming at first sight to obstruct it completely.[1] This, however, is not the case absolutely. The spur itself is penetrable by two passes, one where it joins the Elburz, which is the more difficult of the two, and another, further to the south, which is easier.[2] The latter, now known as the *Girduni Sudurrah* pass, constitutes the famous 'Pylæ Caspiæ.' Through this pass alone can armies proceed from Armenia, Media, and Persia eastward, or from Turkestan, Khorasan, and Affghanistan into the more western parts of Asia. The position is therefore one of primary importance. It was to guard it that Rhages was built so near the eastern end of its territory. So long as it remained in the possession of Syria, Parthian aggression was checked. Rhagiana, the rest of Media, and the other provinces were safe, or nearly so. On the other hand, the loss of it to Parthia laid the eastern provinces open to her, and was at once almost equiva-

[1] Fraser, *Khorasan*, p. 291.

[2] *Ancient Monarchies*, l.s.c. The more northern pass is called the *Girduni Siyaluk*. It is perhaps the 'Pylæ Caspiæ' of Pliny (*H. N.* vi. 14).

lent to the loss of all Rhagiana, which had no other natural protection. Now we find that Phraates surmounted the 'Gates,' and effected a lodgment in the plain country beyond them. He removed a portion of the conquered Mardians from their mountain homes to the city of Charax, which was on the western side of the Gates,[1] probably on the site now occupied by the ruins known as *Uewanikif*.[2] Their location in this strong post[3] was a menace to the neighbouring town of Rhages, which can scarcely have maintained itself long against an enemy encamped at its doors. We are not informed, however, of any results which followed on the occupation of Charax during the life-time of Phraates. His reign lasted only seven years—from B.C. 181 to B.C. 174—and it is thus probable that he died before there was time for his second important conquest to have any further consequences.

Phraates had sufficient warning of his coming decease to make preparations with respect to a successor. Though he had several sons, some of whom were (we must suppose) of sufficient age to have ascended the throne,[4] he left his crown to his brother, Mithridates. He felt, probably, that the State re-

[1] See above, p. 65, note 5. Mr. Lindsay (*History of the Parthians*, p. 7) has strangely confounded the Median Charax with Charax Spasini at the mouth of the Tigris, and has imagined that Phraates I. extended his dominion to the Persian Gulf.

[2] So Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, vol. ii. p. 716. Isidore's description (ἔστιν ὑπὸ τὸ ὄρος ὃ καλεῖται Κάσπιος) would lead one to place it somewhat nearer the 'Gates.'

[3] The word 'Charax' properly means 'palisade,' and applied to a town indicates that it was guarded by a palisaded earthwork. On the strength of such palisaded places under the Parthians, see Polyb. x. 31, § 8. Τάφροι γὰρ ἦσαν τριτταὶ, πλάτος μὲν οὐχ ἔλαττον ἐχουσαι τριάκοντα πηχῶν, βάθος δὲ πεντεκαίδεκα· ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς χείλεσιν ἑκάστης χαρακώματα διπλᾶ ἐπέκειτο, καὶ τελευταῖον προτείχισμα δυνατόν.

[4] Unless this had been the case, Justin would scarcely have dwelt so much upon the meritorious character of Phraates' action (*Hist. Phil.* xli. 5, *ad fin.*).

quired the direction of a firm hand, that war might at any time break out with either Syria or Bactria; while, if the career of conquest on which he had made Parthia enter, were to be pursued, he could trust his brother better than any of his sons to conduct aggressive expeditions with combined vigour and prudence. We shall see, as the history proceeds, how Mithridates justified his choice. Phraates would also appear to have borne his brother especial affection, since he takes the name of 'Philadelphus' (brother-loving) upon his coins.[1] It must have been a satisfaction to him that he was able by his last act at once to consult for the good of his country, and to gratify a sentiment on which it is evident that he prided himself.

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[1] See Lindsay's *Parthians*, p. 136. The subjoined is from a coin of this monarch.

Phraates I. (Obverse.)

CHAPTER V.

Reign of Mithridates I. Position of Bactria and Syria at his accession. His first War with Bactria. His great Expedition against the Eastern Syrian provinces, and its results. His second war with Bactria, terminating in its conquest. Extent of his Empire. Attempt of Demetrius Nicator to recover the lost Provinces, fails. Captivity of Demetrius. Death of Mithridates.

'Mithridati, insignis virtutis viro, reliquit imperium (Phrahates).'
Justin, xli. 5.

THE reign of Mithridates I. is the most important in the Parthian history. Receiving from his brother Phraates a kingdom of but narrow dimensions, confined (as it would seem) between the city of Charax on the one side, and the river Arius, or Heri-rud, on the other, he transformed it, within the space of thirty-seven years (which was the time that his reign lasted), into a great and flourishing Empire. It is not too much to say that, but for him, Parthia might have

Coin of Mithridates I. (Native.) Coin of Mithridates I. (Greek.)

remained a mere petty State on the outskirts of the Syrian kingdom, and instead of becoming a rival to Rome, might have sunk shortly into obscurity and insignificance.

As commonly happens in the grand changes which constitute the turning-points of history, the way for Mithridates' vast successes was prepared by a long train of antecedent circumstances. To show how the rise of the Parthians to greatness in the middle of the second century before our era was rendered possible, we must turn aside once more from our proper subject and cast a glance at the condition of the two kingdoms between which Parthia stood, at the time when Mithridates ascended the throne.

The Bactrian monarchs, in their ambitious struggles to possess themselves of the tracts south of the Paropamisus,[1] and extending from the Heri-rud to the Sutlej and the mouths of the Indus, overstrained the strength of their State, and by shifting the centre of its power injured irretrievably its principle of cohesion. As early as the reign of Demetrius[2] a tendency to disruption showed itself, Eucratidas having held the supreme power for many years in Bactria itself, while Demetrius exercised authority on the southern side of the mountains.[3] It is true that at the death of Demetrius this tendency was to a certain extent checked, since Eucratidas was then able to extend his sway over almost the whole of the Bactrian territory.[4]

[1] See above, ch. iv. p. 62.

[2] Bactria appears to have been *from the first* less centralized than Parthia. Strabo's expression that '*those who were* intrusted with its government' (οἱ πεπιστευμένοι) caused it to revolt, is remarkable, and implies a plurality of princes. The early coins are in accordance. Those of Diodotus II. show us two other contemporary princes, Antimachus and Agathocles, who at one time held their principalities under him, and at another time were independent. (See *Num. Chron.* New Series, vol. viii. Pl. 8, Nos. 5–7; Pl. 9, Nos. 1–8.) Major Cunningham believes that about B.C. 230–225 there were *four* contemporary princes of what is commonly known as the Bactrian series. (Ibid. vol. ix. p. 128.) According to him, the union of the Greek power in the countries east of Parthia was first effected by Euthydemus, ab. B.C. 225.

[3] Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 229, 234, &c. Lassen agrees, though a little doubtfully (*Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. pp. 304, 305).

[4] According to Major Cunning-

But the old evil recurred shortly, though in a less pronounced form. Eucratidas, without being actually supplanted in the north by a rival, found that he could devote to that portion of the Empire but a small part of his attention. The southern countries and the prospect of southern and eastern conquests engrossed him. While he carried on successful wars with the Arachotians, the Drangians, and the Indians of the Punjaub region, his hold on the more northern countries was relaxed, and they began to slip from his grasp.[1] Incursions of the nomad Scyths from the Steppes carried fire and sword over portions of these provinces, some of which were even, it is probable, seized and occupied by the invaders.[2]

Such was, it would seem, the condition of Bactria under Eucratidas, the contemporary of Mithridates. In Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes had succeeded his brother Seleucus IV. (Philopator) about a year before Mithridates ascended the Parthian throne.[3] He was a prince of courage and energy; but his hands were fully occupied with wars in Egypt, Palestine, and Armenia, and the distant East could attract but a small share of his thought or attention. The claim put forward by Egypt to the possession of Cœle-Syria and Palestine, promised to Ptolemy V. (it was affirmed) as a dowry with Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus the Great, led to hostilities in the south-west which

ham, the Indian provinces remained in the possession of the family of Demetrius, falling to his son (?), Lysias, who had for successors Antialcidas, Amyntas, and Hermæus. (*Num. Chron.* New Series, vol. ix. p. 150. Compare vol. viii. p. 274.)

[1] Justin, xli. 6.

[2] Strab. xi. 8, § 2. Μάλιστα δὲ γνώριμοι γεγόνασι τῶν νομάδων οἱ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἀφελόμενοι τὴν Βακτριανήν. Strabo does not fix the date, but it can scarcely have been either earlier or later than the reign of Eucratidas. (Compare Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, p. 236.)

[3] The accession of Epiphanes is fixed to B.C. 175 by the best chronologers. (See Clinton, *F. H.* vol. iii. pp. 317–322.) Mithridates probably became king in B.C. 174.

lasted continuously for four years (B.C. 171 to B.C. 168), and were complicated during two of them with troubles in Judæa, rashly provoked by the Syrian monarch, who, unaware of the stubborn temper of the Jews, goaded them into insurrection.[1] The war with Egypt came to an end in B.C. 168; it brought Syria no advantage, since Rome interposed, and required the restitution of all conquests. The war with the Jews had no such rapid termination. Antiochus, having not only plundered and desecrated the Temple, but having set himself to eradicate utterly the Jewish religion, and completely Hellenise the people, was met with the most determined resistance on the part of a moiety of the nation. A patriotic party rose up under devoted leaders,[2] who asserted, and in the end secured, the independence of their country. Not alone during the remaining years of Epiphanes, but for half a century after his death, throughout seven reigns, the struggle continued; Judæa taking advantage of every trouble and difficulty in Syria to detach herself more and more completely from her oppressor; being a continual thorn in her side, a constant source of weakness, preventing more than anything else the recovery of her power. The triumph which Epiphanes obtained in the distant Armenia (B.C. 166–5), where he defeated and captured the king, Artaxias,[3] was a poor set-off against the foe which he had created to himself at his doors through his cruelty and intolerance.

In another quarter, too, the Syrian power received a severe shake through the injudicious violence of Epiphanes. The Oriental temples had, in some instances, escaped the rapacity of Alexander's generals and 'Suc-

[1] See 1 Maccab. i. 21–64; and compare Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xii. 5, 6; Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 1, § 3, 4.

[2] 1 Mac. ii.–vi.

[3] Appian, *Syriac.* p. 131, B.; Liv. xli. 25.

cessors;' their treasuries remained unviolated, and contained large hoards of the precious metals. Epiphanes, having exhausted his own exchequer by his wars and his lavish gifts, saw in these unplundered stores a means of replenishing it, and made a journey into his south-eastern provinces for the purpose. The natives of Elymaïs, however, resisted his attempt, and proved strong enough to defeat it;[1] the baffled monarch retired to Tabæ, where he shortly afterwards fell sick and died. In the popular belief his death was a judgment upon him for his attempted sacrilege;[2] and in the exultation caused by the event, the bands which joined these provinces to the Empire must undoubtedly have been loosened.

Nor did the removal of Epiphanes (B.C. 164) improve the condition of affairs in Syria. The throne fell to his son, Antiochus Eupator, a boy of nine, according to Appian,[3] or, according to another authority,[4] of twelve years of age. The regent, Lysias, exercised the chief power, and was soon engaged in a war with the Jews,[5] whom the death of Epiphanes had encouraged to fresh efforts. The authority of Lysias was further disputed by a certain Philip, whom Epiphanes, shortly before his death, had made tutor to the young king.[6] The claims of this tutor to the regent's office being supported by a considerable portion of the army, a civil war arose between him and Lysias, which raged for the greater part of two years (B.C. 163–2), terminating in the defeat and death of Philip. But Syrian affairs did not even then settle

[1] Polyb. xxxi. 11; 1 Mac. vi. 1-4. Appian makes him succeed in plundering the Temple (*Syriac.* p. 131, C.), but he is to be corrected from Polybius.

[2] Polyb. l.s.c. The Jews naturally regarded their own wrongs as the cause of their oppressor's untimely end. (1 Mac. vi. 13.)

[3] *Syriac.* p. 117, B.

[4] Porphyr. ap. Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 15.

[5] 1 Mac. vi. 17-62.

[6] Ibid. vi. 15, 55, 63.

down into tranquillity. A prince of the Seleucid house, Demetrius by name, the son of Seleucus IV., and consequently the first cousin of Eupator, was at this time detained in Rome as a hostage, having been sent there during his father's lifetime, as a security for his fidelity. Demetrius, with some reason, regarded his claim to the Syrian throne as better than that of his cousin, the son of the younger brother, and being in the full vigour of early youth,[1] he determined to assert his pretensions in Syria, and to make a bold stroke for the crown. Having failed to obtain the Senate's consent to his quitting Italy, he took his departure secretly,[2] crossed the Mediterranean in a Carthaginian vessel, and landing in Asia, succeeded within a few months in establishing himself as Syrian monarch.

From this review it sufficiently appears that the condition of things, both in Syria and Bactria, was favourable to any aspirations which the power that lay between them might entertain after dominion and self-aggrandizement. The Syrian and Bactrian kings, at the time of Mithridates' accession, were, both of them, men of talent and energy; but the Syrian monarch was soon involved in difficulties at home, while the Bactrian had his attention attracted to prospects of advantage in a remote quarter. Mithridates might, perhaps, have attacked the territory of either with an equal chance of victory; and as his predecessor had set him the example of successful warfare on his western frontier, we might have expected his first efforts to have been in this direction, against the dependencies of Syria. But circumstances which we

[1] He was in his twenty-third year. (See Polyb. xxxi. 12, § 5.)

[2] The circumstances of this secret departure are given in detail by Polybius, who was a friend of Demetrius and privy to his escape. (See Polyb. xxxi. 19–23.)

cannot exactly trace determined his choice differently. While Eucratidas was entangled in his Indian wars, Mithridates invaded the Bactrian territory where it adjoined Parthia, and added to his Empire, after a short struggle, two provinces, called respectively Turiûa and that of Aspionus.[1] It is conjectured that these provinces lay towards the north and the north-west, the one being that of the Turanians proper, and the other that of the Aspasiacæ,[2] who dwelt between the Jaxartes and the Oxus.[3] But there is scarcely sufficient ground for forming even a conjecture on the subject, since speculation has nothing but the names themselves to rest upon.[4]

Successful in this quarter, Mithridates, a few years later, having waited until the Syrian throne was occupied by the boy Eupator, and the two claimants of the regency, Lysias and Philip, were contending in arms for the supreme power, made suddenly an expedition towards the west, falling upon Media, which, though claimed by the Syrian kings as a province of their Empire, was perhaps at this time almost, if not quite, independent.[5] The Medes offered a vigorous resistance to his attack; and, in the war which followed, each side had in turn the advantage;[6] but

[1] Strab. xi. 11, § 2. Mithridates is not named by Strabo, but must have been the conqueror, as the contemporary of Eucratidas.

[2] Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 294.

[3] Supra, p. 48, note 4.

[4] The names furnish but an uncertain ground. Lassen seems to assume the identity of *Turiûa* with *Turan*, which is no doubt possible, but still very doubtful, the word *Turan* not otherwise occurring till the time of the Sassanians. Aspionus is not *very* close to Aspasiacæ. Professor H. H. Wilson placed Aspionus at Andkhuy, and Turiûa in the Hazareh Mountains, to the south of Maymene. (See his Map, *Ariana Antiqua*, opp. p. 214.)

[5] The quasi-independence of Media is implied in the account of Justin, who represents the war simply as one between the Medes and the Parthians (xli. 6).

[6] Justin, l.s.c. 'Cum varius utriusque populi casus fuisset, ad postremum victoria penes Parthos fuit.'

eventually the Parthian prince proved victorious, and the great and valuable province of Media Magna was added to the dominions of the Arsacidæ. A certain Bacasis was appointed to govern it, whether as satrap or as tributary monarch is not apparent;[1] while the Parthian king, recalled towards home by a revolt, proceeded to crush rebellion before resuming his career of conquest.

The revolt which now occupied for a time the attention of Mithridates was that of Hyrcania.[2] The Hyrcanians were Arians in race; they were brave and high-spirited,[3] and under the Persian monarchs had enjoyed some exceptional privileges,[4] which placed them above the great mass of the conquered nations. It was natural that they should dislike the yoke of a Turanian people; and it was wise of them to make their effort to obtain their freedom before Parthia grew into a power against which revolt would be utterly hopeless. Hyrcania might now expect to be joined by the Medes, and even the Mardi, who were Arians like themselves,[5] and could not yet have forgotten the pleasures of independence. But though the effort does not seem to have been ill-timed, it was unsuccessful. No aid was given to the rebels, so far as we hear, by any of their neighbours. Mithridates' prompt return nipped the insurrection in the bud; Hyrcania at once submitted, and became for centuries the obedient vassal of her powerful neighbour.

The conquest of Media had brought the Parthians

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[1] Justin's words ('Mithridates Mediæ Bacasin præponit') point rather to an appointment as satrap; but the ordinary system of the Parthians was to govern by means of tributary monarchs.

[2] Justin, l.s.c.

[3] Q. Curt. *Hist. Alex.* vi. 4, § 15.

[4] Xen. *Cyrop.* iv. 2, § 8.

[5] See the author's *Herodotus*, vol. i. p. 345, 2nd edit.

into contact with the rich country of Susiana or Elymaïs; and it was not long before Mithridates, having crushed the Hyrcanian revolt, again advanced westward, and invaded this important province. Elymaïs appears to have had a king of its own,[1] who must either have been a vassal of the Seleucidæ, or have acquired an independent position by revolt after the death of Epiphanes. In the war which followed between this monarch and Mithridates, the Elymæans proved wholly unsuccessful, and Mithridates rapidly overran the country and added it to his dominions. After this he appears to have received the submission of the Persians on the one hand, and the Babylonians on the other,[2] and to have rested on his laurels for some years,[3] having extended the Parthian sway from the Hindoo Koosh to the Euphrates.

The chronological data, which have come down to us for this period, are too scanty to allow of any exact statement of the number of years occupied by Mithridates in effecting these conquests. All that can be said is, that he appears to have commenced them about B.C. 163, and to have concluded them some time before B.C. 140, when he was in his turn attacked by the Syrians. Probably they had been all effected by the year B.C. 150; since there is reason to believe that about that time[4] Mithridates found his power sufficiently

[1] Justin, l.s.c. 'Bellum cum Elymæorum rege gessit [Mithridates].'

[2] If the Persians and Babylonians had been reduced by force of arms, Justin would probably have mentioned their reduction in Bk. xli. ch. 6. As it is, we must regard the submission of the Babylonians as implied in that chapter, and that of the Persians in Bk. xxxvi. ch. 1.

[3] The reduction of the Babylonians is assigned by Orosius (v. 5) to the time of the contest between Demetrius and Alexander Balas, B.C. 153-151. But the authority is not very good, and it is probable that they submitted earlier.

[4] The reduction of the Bactrians by Mithridates is implied in the statement of Justin, that they were among the people who welcomed the expedition of Demetrius, having

established in the west to allow of his once more turning his attention eastward, and renewing his aggressions upon the Bactrian kingdom, which had passed from the rule of Eucratidas under that of his son and successor, Heliocles.[1]

Heliocles, who was allowed by his father a quasi-royal position,[2] obtained the full possession of the Bactrian throne by the crime of parricide. It is conjectured that he regarded with disapproval his father's tame submission to Parthian ascendancy, and desired the recovery of the provinces which Eucratidas had been content to cede for the sake of peace.[3] We are told that he justified his crime on the ground that his father was a public enemy;[4] which is best explained by supposing that he considered him the friend of Bactria's great enemy, Parthia. If this be the true account of the circumstances under which he became king, his accession would have been a species of challenge to the Parthian monarch, whose ally he had assassinated. Mithridates accordingly marched against him with all speed, and easily defeating his troops, took possession of the greater part of his dominions.[5] Elated by this success, he is said to have pressed eastward, to have invaded India, and over-run the country as far as the river Hydaspes;[6] but, if it be true that his arms pene-

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experienced the cruelty of the Parthians (xxxvi. 1). The exact time of the invasion, and the Bactrian monarch who resisted it, are uncertain.

[1] This relation of Heliocles to Eucratidas is proved by a coin, which shows him to have been associated with that monarch, agreeably to the statement of Justin. (See Wilson, *Ar. Ant.* p. 264; Lassen, *Ind. Alt.* ii. p. 313.) Major Cunningham's idea, that the effigies on the obverse of this coin represent the father and mother of Eucratidas, seems to me quite untenable.

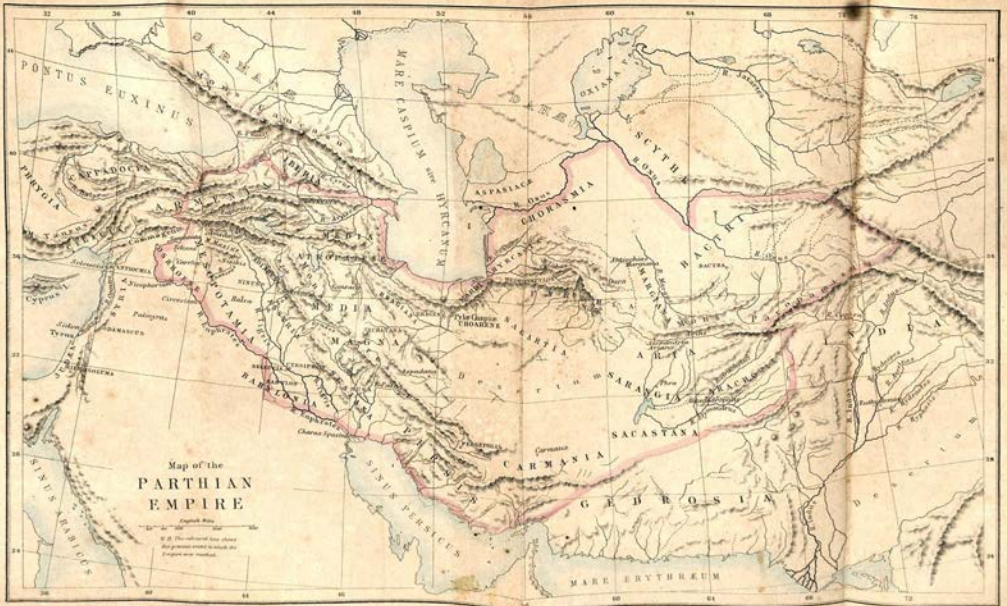
[2] Justin, xli. 6, § 5.

[3] Wilson, p. 264.

[4] Justin, l.s.c. It may have been in the same spirit that Heliocles took the epithet of Δίκαιος, which appears upon his coins.

[5] Justin, xli. 6.

[6] Orosius, v. 5. Compare Diod.


Map of the
PARTHIAN
EMPIRE
PONTUS EUXINUS
MARE CASPIUM sive HYRCANUM
SINUS PERSICUS
SINUS ARABICUS
MARE ERYTHRÆUM
CAPPADOCIA
PHRYGIA
ARMENIA
IBERIA
MEDIA
ATROPATENE
MEDIA
MAGNA
MESOPOTAMIA
BABYLONIA
PERSIS
CARMANIA
GEDROSIA
SACASTANA
SARANGIA
ARIA
SARTIA
PARTHIA
MARGIANA
BACTRIA
SCYTHIA
CHORASMIA
ASPASIACÆ
OXIANA
DARÆ
Desertum
Pyle Caspiæ
CHOARENE
Carmania
Charax Spasinus
Tyrus
Sidon
Cyprus
Palmyra
Nicephorus
Circesium
Balsa
Tigris
Aspadana
Thra
Bactra
Oxus
Jaxartes
Tanais
Indus
Hydraspes
Hydrocanus
Arsacia
Ecbatana
Cyrus
Arsacia
Sinus
Cyprus
Sidon
Tyrus
Damascus
Jerusalem
Sinus
Persicus
Carmania
Gedrosia
Mare Erythræum
Sinus Arabicus
Desertum
Engraved by Edwd Wallis

trated so far, it is, at any rate, certain that he did not here effect any conquest. Greek monarchs [1] of the Bactrian series continued masters of Cabul and Western India till about B.C. 126; no Parthian coins are found in this region; nor do the best authorities claim for Mithridates any dominion beyond the mountains which enclose on the west the valley of the Indus.

By his war with Heliocles the empire of Mithridates reached its greatest extension. It comprised now, besides Parthia Proper, Bactria, Aria, Drangiana, Arachosia, Margiana, Hyrcania, the country of the Mardi, Media Magna, Susiana, Persia, and Babylonia. Very probably its limits were still wider. The power which possessed Parthia, Hyrcania, and Bactria, would rule almost of necessity over the whole tract between the Elburz range and the Oxus, if not even over the region between the Oxus and the Jaxartes: that which held the Caspian mountains and eastern Media could not fail to have influence over the tribes of the Iranic desert; while Assyria Proper would naturally follow the fortunes of Babylonia and Susiana.[2] Still the extent of territory thus indicated rests only on conjecture. If we confine ourselves to what is known by positive evidence, we can only say that the Parthian Kingdom of this period contained, at least, the twelve provinces above enumerated. It thus stretched from east to west a distance of fifteen hundred miles between the Suleiman mountains and the Euphrates, varying in width from three or four hundred miles—or even more—towards the west and east, to a narrow strip of less than a

Sic. xxxiii. 20. These conquests are somewhat doubtful, since Justin seems to have known nothing of them.

[1] See Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 268–300.

[2] Moses of Chorene makes Assyria subject to Mithridates, whom he calls 'the great Arsaces' (*Hist. Armen.* ii. 4, § 1).

hundred miles towards the centre. It probably comprised an area of about 450,000 square miles; which is somewhat less than that of the modern Persia.

Unlike the modern Persia, however, the territory consisted almost entirely of productive regions. The excellent quality of the soil in Parthia Proper, Hyrcania, and Margiana, has been already noticed.[1] Bactria, the next province to Margiana towards the east, was less uniformly fertile; but still it contained a considerable proportion of good land along the course of the Oxus and its tributaries, which was cultivated in vineyards and cornfields, or else pastured large herds of cattle.[2] The Mardian mountain territory was well wooded;[3] and the plain between the mountains and the Caspian was rich in the extreme.[4] Media, where it adjoined on the desert, was comparatively sterile; but still even here an elaborate system of artificial irrigation brought a belt of land under culture.[5] Further west, in the Zagros chain, Media comprised some excellent pasture lands,[6] together with numerous valleys as productive as any in Asia.[7] Elymaïs was, in part, of the same character with the mountainous portion of Media, while beyond the mountains it sank down into a rich alluvium, not much inferior to the Babylonian.[8] Babylonia itself was confessedly the most fertile country in Asia. It produced wheat, barley, millet, sesame, vetches, dates,

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[1] Supra, pp. 7, 10, and 12.

[2] Q. Curt. *Hist. Alex.* vii. 4, § 26: 'Bactriana terra multiplex et varia natura est. Alibi multa arbor, et vitis largos mitesque fructus alit: solum pingue crebri fontes rigant; quæ mitiora sunt frumento conseruntur: cætera armentorum pabulo cedunt.'

[3] Ibid. vi. 5.

[4] Ibid. vi. 4.

[5] Polyb. x. 28, § 3.

[6] Especially the district called Nisæa, where the Nisæan horses were bred. (Arrian, *Exp. Al.* vii. 13; Diod. Sic. xvii. 110, § 6; Am. Marc. xxiii. 6.)

[7] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. pp. 289, 290, 2nd ed.

[8] Strab. xv. 3, § 11.

and fruits of all kinds.[1] The return of the wheat crop was from fifty to a hundred-and-fifty-fold;[2] while that of the barley crop was three hundred-fold.[3] The dates were of unusual size and superior flavour;[4] and the palm, which abounded throughout the region, furnished an inexhaustible supply both of fruit and timber.[5]

The great increase of power which Mithridates had obtained by his conquests could not be a matter of indifference to the Syrian monarchs. Their domestic troubles—the contentions between Philip and Lysias, between Lysias and Demetrius Soter, Soter and Alexander Balas, Balas and Demetrius II., Demetrius II. and Tryphon, had so engrossed them for the space of twenty years (from B.C. 162 to B.C. 142), that they had felt it impossible, or hopeless, to attempt any expedition towards the East, for the protection or recovery of their provinces. Mithridates had been allowed to pursue his career of conquest unopposed, so far as the Syrians were concerned, and to establish his sway from the Hindoo Koosh to the Euphrates. But a time at last came when home dangers were less pressing, and a prospect of engaging the terrible Parthians with success seemed to present itself. The second Demetrius had not, indeed, wholly overcome his domestic enemy, Tryphon; but he had so far brought him into difficulties as to believe that he might safely be left to be dealt with by his wife, Cleopatra, and by his captains.[6]

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[1] Herod. i. 193; Berosus, Fr. 1, § 2.

[2] Theophrast. *Hist. Plant.* viii. 7; Plin. *H. N.* xviii. 17.

[3] Strab. xvi. 1, § 14.

[4] Theophrast. *Hist. Plant.* ii. 2.

[5] Herod. l. s. c.; Strab. l. s. c.; Amm. Marc. xxiv. 3; Zosim. iii. p. 173.

[6] The troubles of the reign of Demetrius are given with much fulness in the first book of Maccabees, ch. xi.–xiii.

At the same time the condition of affairs in the East seemed to invite his interference. Mithridates ruled his new conquests with some strictness,[1] suspecting, probably, their fidelity, and determined that he would not by any remissness allow them to escape from his grasp. The native inhabitants could scarcely be much attached to the Syro-Macedonians, who had certainly not treated them very tenderly;[2] but a possession of 170 years' duration confers prestige in the East, and a strange yoke may have galled more than one to whose pressure they had become accustomed. Moreover, all the provinces which Parthia took from Syria contained Greek towns, and their inhabitants might at all times be depended on to side with their countrymen against the Asiatics. At the present conjuncture, too, the number of the malcontents was swelled by the addition of the recently subdued Bactrians, who hated the Parthian yoke, and longed earnestly for a chance of recovering their freedom.

Thus when Demetrius II., anxious to escape the reproach of inertness,[3] determined to make an expedition against the great Parthian monarch, he found himself welcomed as a deliverer by a considerable number of his enemy's subjects, whom the harshness, or the novelty, of the Parthian rule had offended.[4] The malcontents joined his standard as he advanced; and supported, as he thus was, by Persian, Elymæan, and Bactrian contingents, he engaged and defeated the Parthians in several battles.[5] Upon this, Mithridates,

[1] The provinces complained of his *cruelty* ('propter Arsacidæ regis Parthorum crudelitatem.'—Justin, xxxvi. 1, § 3).

[2] See above, p. 73.

[3] Justin, xxxvi. 1, § 2: 'ad abolendam segnitiæ maculam.'

[4] 'Quòd veteri Macedonum imperio admoti, novi populi superbiam indigne ferebant.' (Justin, xxxvi. 1, § 3.)

[5] 'Cùm et Persarum, et Elymæorum, et Bactrianorum auxiliis juvaretur, multis prœliis Parthos fudit.' (Ib. § 4. Compare xxxviii. 9, § 2.)

finding himself inferior in strength, had recourse to stratagem, and having put Demetrius off his guard by proposals of peace,[1] attacked him, defeated him, and took him prisoner.[2] The invading army appears to have been destroyed.[3] The captive monarch was, in the first instance, conveyed about to the several nations which had revolted, and paraded before each in turn, as a proof to them of their folly in lending him aid;[4] but afterwards he was treated in a manner befitting his rank and the high character of his captor.[5] Assigned a residence in Hyrcania, he was maintained in princely state, and was even promised by Mithridates the hand of his daughter, Rhodogune.[6] The Parthian monarch, it is probable, had the design of conquering Syria, and thought it possible that he might find it of advantage to have a Syrian prince in his camp, well-disposed towards him, connected by marriage, and thus fitted for the position of tributary monarch. But the schemes of Mithridates proved abortive. His career had now reached its close. Attacked by illness[7] not very long after his capture of Demetrius, his strength proved insufficient to bear up against the malady, and he died after a glorious reign of about thirty-eight years, B.C. 136.

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[1] 'Ad postremum tamen pacis simulatione deceptus capitur' (Ib. xxxvi. 1, § 5). 'Repente insidiis circumventus' (Ib. xxxviii. 9, § 2).

[2] Justin, l. s. c.; Appian, *Syriac.* p. 132, A; Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 15; Oros. v. 4.

[3] 'Amisso exercitu' (Justin, xxxviii. 9, 2). Comp. 1 Mac. xiv. 3.

[4] Justin, xxxvi. 1, § 5: 'Traductus per ora civitatium, populis, qui desciverant, in ludibrium favoris ostenditur.'

[5] Ibid. l. s. c.: 'Missus deinde in Hyrcaniam, benigne et juxta cultum pristinæ fortunæ habetur.' Compare xxxviii. 9, § 3. 'Cui Arsacides Parthorum rex, *magno et regio animo*, misso in Hyrcaniam non cultum tantum regium præstitit, sed et filiam in matrimonium dedit, &c.'

[6] App. *Syriac.* l. s. c.

[7] 'Adversa valetudine correptus' (Justin, xli. 6, § 9).

CHAPTER VI.

System of government established by Mithridates I. Constitution of the Parthians. Government of the Provinces. Laws and Institutions. Character of Mithridates I.

'Rex, magno et regio animo.'—Justin, xxxviii., 9, § 3.

THE Parthian institutions possessed great simplicity; and it is probable that they took a shape in the reign of Arsaces I., or, at any rate, of Tiridates, which was not greatly altered afterwards. Permanency is the law of Oriental governments; and in a monarchy which lasted less than five hundred years, it is not likely that many changes occurred. The Parthian institutions are referred to Mithridates I., rather than to Tiridates, because in the reign of Mithridates Parthia entered upon a new phase of her existence—became an empire instead of a mere monarchy; and the sovereign of the time could not but have reviewed the circumstances of his State, and have determined either to adopt the previous institutions of his country, or to reject them. Mithridates I. had attained a position which entitled and enabled him to settle the Parthian constitution as he thought best; and, if he maintained an earlier arrangement, which is uncertain, he must have done so of his own free will, simply because he preferred the existing Parthian institutions to any other. Thus the institutions may be regarded as starting from him, since he approved them, and made them those of the Parthian EMPIRE.

Like most sovereignties which have arisen out of an

association of chiefs banding themselves together for warlike purposes under a single head, the Parthian monarchy was limited. The king was permanently advised by two councils, consisting of persons not of his own nomination, whom rights, conferred by birth or office, entitled to their seats. One of these was a family conclave (*concilium domesticum*), or assembly of the full-grown males of the Royal House; the other was a Senate comprising both the spiritual and the temporal chiefs of the nation, the Sophi, or 'Wise Men,' and the Magi, or 'Priests.'[1] Together these two bodies constituted the Megistanes, the 'Nobles' or 'Great Men'—the privileged class which to a considerable extent checked and controlled the monarch. The monarchy was elective, but only in the house of the Arsacidæ; and the concurrent vote of both councils was necessary in the appointment of a new king. Practically, the ordinary law of hereditary descent appears to have been followed, unless in the case where a king left no son of sufficient age to exercise the royal office. Under such circumstances, the Megistanes usually nominated the late king's next brother to succeed him,[2] or, if he had left behind him no brother, went back to an uncle.[3] When the line of succession had once been changed, the right of the elder branch was lost, and did not revive unless the branch preferred died out or possessed no member qualified to rule. When a king had been duly nominated by the two councils, the right of placing the

[1] Posidonius ap. Strab. xi. 9, § 3. Τῶν Παρθυαίων συνέδριόν φησιν εἶναι Ποσειδώνιος διττόν, τὸ μὲν συγγενῶν, τὸ δὲ σοφῶν καὶ μάγων, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοῖν τοὺς βασιλεῖς καθίστασθαι.

[2] There are five instances of brothers succeeding—viz., those of Mithridates I., Orodes I., Gotarzes, Chosroës, and Artabanus III. One of these, however, that of Mithridates I., is ascribed to the will of the previous monarch.

[3] As in the case of Artabanus I., the successor of Phraates II.

diadem upon his head belonged to the Surena,[1] the 'Field-Marshal,' or 'Commander in Chief of the Parthian armies.' The Megistanes further claimed and sometimes exercised the right of deposing a monarch whose conduct displeased them; but an attempt to exercise this privilege was sure to be followed by a civil war, no monarch accepting his deposition without a struggle; and force, not right, practically determining whether he should remain king or no.

After a king was once elected and firmly fixed upon the throne, his power appears to have been nearly despotic. At any rate, he could put to death without trial whomsoever he chose; and adult members of the Royal House, who provoked the reigning monarch's jealousy, were constantly so treated.[2] Probably it would have been more dangerous to arouse the fears of the 'Sophi' and 'Magi.' The latter especially were a powerful body, consisting of an organised hierarchy, which had come down from ancient times, and was feared and venerated by all classes of the people.[3] Their numbers at the close of the Empire, counting adult males only, are reckoned at eighty thousand;[4] they possessed considerable tracts of fertile land,[5] and were the sole inhabitants of many large towns or villages, which they were permitted to govern as they pleased.[6] The arbitrary power of the monarchs must, in practice, have been largely checked by the privileges

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 42; Appian, *Parth.* p. 141, A. According to this latter writer, the right was hereditary in the family to which the Surena who opposed Crassus belonged.

[2] Phraates IV., on his accession, put to death his twenty-nine brothers.

[3] The high position of the Magi under the Parthian kings is strongly marked by their place in the Great Council. (See above, p. 85, note 1.)

[4] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 333 (Smith's edition).

[5] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6; p. 405.

[6] Ibid. p. 406.

of this numerous priestly caste, of which it would seem that in later times they became jealous, thereby preparing the way for their own downfal.[1]

The dominion of the Parthians over the conquered provinces was maintained by reverting to the system which had prevailed generally through the East before the accession of the Persians to power, and establishing in the various countries either viceroys, holding office for life, or sometimes dependent dynasties of kings.[2] In either case, the rulers, so long as they paid tribute regularly to the Parthian monarchs and aided them in their wars, were allowed to govern the people beneath their sway at their pleasure. Among monarchs, in the higher sense of the term, may be enumerated the kings of Persia,[3] Elymaïs,[4] Adiabêné,[5] Osrhoêné,[6] and of Armenia and Media Atropatêné, when they formed, as they sometimes did, portions of the Parthian Empire. The viceroys, who governed the other provinces, bore the title of *Vitaxæ* (*βίστακες*), and were fourteen or fifteen in number.[7] The remark has been made by the historian, Gibbon,[8] that the system thus established 'exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system, which has since prevailed in Europe.'

[1] Agathias, ii. 25. *Τὸ μαγικὸν φῦλον ἐγκρατὲς ἐξ ἐκείνου [τοῦ Ἀρταξάρου] γέγονε καὶ ἀγέρωχον, ὃν μὲν ἤδη καὶ πρότερον, οὔπω δὲ ἐς τοῦτο τιμῆς τε καὶ παῤῥησίας ἠρμένον, ἀλλ' ὁποῖον ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν τέλει ἐστὶν ᾗ καὶ περιορᾶσθαι.*

[2] Pliny correctly calls the Parthian provinces 'kingdoms.' ('*Regna* Parthorum octodecim sunt omnia,' *H. N.* vi. 25.) The Greek writers most commonly call them 'satrapies,' but incorrectly.

[3] Strab. xv. 3, § 24.

[4] Ibid. xvi. 1, § 19. This monarch appears to have had special privileges.

[5] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 2; Oros. vii. 6; Dio Cass. lxviii. 19.

[6] Dio Cass. xl. 20; lxviii. 18.

[7] Ammianus makes the *vitaxæ* eighteen in number, but includes among them the 'kings' of Persia, Susiana, &c. He explains the term as signifying 'Masters of the Horse and Royal Satraps'; but Hesychius says more briefly, and probably more correctly, *βισταξ ὁ βασιλεὺς παρὰ Πέρσαις* (i.e. *Πάρθοις*).

[8] *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 339, Smith's edition.

The comparison is of some value, but, like most historical parallels, it is inexact, the points of difference between the Parthian and the feudal system being probably more numerous than those of resemblance, but the points of resemblance being very main points, not few in number, and striking.

It was with special reference to the system thus established that the Parthian monarchs took the title of 'King of Kings' (*βασιλεὺς βασιλέων*), so frequent upon their coins,[1] which seems sometimes to have been exchanged for what was regarded as an equivalent phrase,[2] 'Satrap of Satraps' (*σατράπης τῶν σατράπων*). This title seems to appear first on the coins of Mithridates I.

In the Parthian system there was one anomaly of a very curious character. The Greek towns, which were scattered in large numbers throughout the Empire,[3] enjoyed a municipal government of their own, and in some cases were almost independent communities, the Parthian kings exercising over them little or no control. The great city of Seleucia on the Tigris was the most important of all these: its population was estimated in the first century after Christ at six hundred thousand souls;[4] it had strong walls,[5] and was surrounded by a

[1] See Lindsay, *History of the Parthians*, p. 213. In one instance the phrase is exchanged for *βασιλεύοντος βασιλέων*.

[2] The phrase 'Satrap of Satraps' occurs only in one inscription, that of Gotarzes at Behistun, and has been thought to throw some doubt on the identification of the Gotarzes who set it up with the twenty-first Arsaces. But the doubt is scarcely reasonable; and it does not seem unlikely that under the Parthian system the distinct force of the word 'satrap' would be lost, and it would come to be regarded as a title equivalent to king.

[3] Appian enumerates twenty-five besides those which Seleucus Nicator built and named after himself or his relations, which he estimates at thirty-five more. (*Syriaca*, pp. 124, 125.) Isidore of Charax finds, upon a single line of route, sixteen (*Mans. Parth.* § 1–19). On the general subject, see Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. viii. p. 474, ed. of 1862.

[4] Plin. *H. N.* vi. 26.

[5] 'Civitas potens, septa muris.' (Tac. *Ann.* vi. 42.)

most fertile territory.[1] It had its own senate, or municipal council, of three hundred members, elected by the people to rule them from among the wealthiest and best educated of the citizens.[2] Under ordinary circumstances, it enjoyed the blessing of complete self-government, and was entirely free from Parthian interference, paying no doubt its tribute, but otherwise holding the position of a 'free city.' It was only in the case of internal dissensions that these advantages were lost, and the Parthian soldiery, invited within the walls, arranged the quarrels of parties, and settled the constitution of the State at its pleasure. Privileges of a similar character, though, probably, less extensive, belonged (it would seem) to most of the other Greek cities of the Empire. The Parthian monarchs thought it politic to favour them; and their practice justified the title of 'Phil-Hellene,' which they were fond of assuming upon their coins. On the whole, the policy may have been wise, but it diminished the unity of the Empire; and there were times when serious danger arose from it. The Syro-Macedonian monarchs could always count with certainty on having powerful friends in Parthia, whatever portion of it they invaded; and even the Romans, though their ethnic connection with the cities was not so close, were sometimes indebted to them for very important assistance.[3]

We are told that Mithridates I., after effecting his conquests, made a collection of the best laws which he found to prevail among the various subject peoples, and imposed them upon the Parthian nation.[4] This state-

[1] 'Ager totius Orientis fertilissimus.' (Plin. l.s.c.)

[2] 'Trecenti, opibus aut sapientia delecti, ut Senatus.' (Tacit. l.s.c.)

[3] See what Dio says of the Greek and Macedonian colonies in Mesopotamia at the time of the invasion of Crassus (xl. 13). Compare Appian, *Parthica*, p. 136, D.

[4] Diod. Sic. xxxiii. 20.

ment is, no doubt, an exaggeration; but we may attribute, with some reason, to Mithridates the introduction at this time of various practices and usages, whereby the Parthian Court was assimilated to those of the earlier Great Monarchies of Asia, and became in the eyes of foreigners the successor and representative of the old Assyrian and Persian Kingdoms. The assumption of new titles and of a new state—the organisation of the Court on a new plan—the bestowal of a new character on the subordinate officers of the Empire, were suitable to the new phase of its life on which the monarchy had now entered, and may with the highest probability, if not with absolute certainty, be assigned to this period.

It has been already noticed that Mithridates appears to have been the first Parthian sovereign who took the title of 'King of Kings.'[1] The title had been a favourite one with the old Assyrian and Persian monarchs,[2] but was not adopted either by the Seleucidæ or by the Greek kings of Bactria.[3] Its revival implied a distinct pretension to that mastery of Western Asia which had belonged of old to the Assyrians and Persians, and which was, in later times, formally claimed by Artaxerxes,[4] the son of Sassan, the founder of the New Persian Kingdom. Previous Parthian monarchs had been content to call themselves 'the King,' or 'the Great King'—Mithridates is 'the King of Kings, the great and illustrious Arsaces.'

At the same time Mithridates appears to have

[1] Supra, p. 88.

[2] See *Tiglath-Pileser Inscription*, p. 20; *Behist. Ins.* col. i. par. 1; *Persep. Ins.* passim.

[3] The Seleucidæ from first to last retain the modest ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ. The Græco-Bactrian kings use the same style at first, but afterwards change it for ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ. (See Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 237–241.) Tigranes of Armenia, like the later Parthian monarchs, claims to be *βασιλεὺς βασιλέων*.

[4] Herodian, vi. 6.

assumed the tiara, or tall stiff crown, which, with certain modifications in its shape, had been the mark of sovereignty, both under the Assyrians and under the Persians. Previously the royal head-dress had been either a mere cap of a Scythic type, but lower than the Scyths commonly wore it;[1] or the ordinary diadem, which was a band round the head terminating in two long ribbons or ends, that hung down behind the head on the back. According to Herodian, the diadem, in the later times,

Arsaces I. Mithridates I. Artabanus I.

was double;[2] but the coins of Parthia do not exhibit this peculiarity.

Ammianus says,[3] that among the titles assumed by the Parthian monarchs was that of 'Brother of the Sun and Moon.' It appears that something of a divine character was regarded as attaching to the race. In the civil contentions, which occur so frequently throughout the later history, combatants abstained from lifting their hands knowingly against an Arsacid, to kill or wound one being looked upon as sacrilege.[4] The name of Θεὸς was occasionally assumed, as it was in Syria; and more frequently kings took the epithet of θεοπάτωρ, which implied the divinity of their father.[5] After his

[1] On the ordinary Scythic cap, see the author's *Herodotus*, vol. iii. p. 3, and vol. iv. p. 53.

[2] Herodian, vi. 6.

[3] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6; 'Ad id tempus reges ejusdem gentis pertumidi, appellari se patiuntur Solis fratres atque Lunæ.' The same title is borne by the modern Shahs of Persia.

[4] Ibid. 'In qualibet civili concertatione, quæ assidue apud eos eveniunt, velut sacrilegium quisque cavet ne dextera sua Arsacidem arma gestantem feriat vel privatum.'

[5] According to Mr. Lindsay,

death a monarch seems generally to have been the object of a qualified worship; statues were erected to him in the temples, where (apparently) they were associated with the images of the great luminaries.[1]

Of the Parthian Court and its customs we have no account that is either complete or trustworthy. Some particulars, however, may be gathered of it on which we may place reliance. The best authorities are agreed that it was not stationary, but migrated at different times of the year to different cities of the Empire, in this resembling the Court of the Achæmenians. It is not quite clear, however, which were the cities thus honoured. Ctesiphon was undoubtedly one of them. All writers agree that it was the chief city of the Empire, and the ordinary seat of the government.[2] Here, according to Strabo, the kings passed the winter months, delighting in the excellence of the air.[3] The town was situated on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite to Seleucia, twelve or thirteen miles below the modern Baghdad. Pliny says[4] that it was built by the Parthians in order to reduce Seleucia to insignificance, and that when it failed of its purpose, they built another city, Vologesocerta, in the same neighbourhood with the same object; but the account of Strabo is more

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Priapatius was the first 'Theopator' (*History of the Parthians*, p. 213). Others make the first to have been Phraates II., the son and successor of Mithridates (Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, vol. ii. p. 252). The first king who took the epithet of Θεὸς is thought to be Phraates III. (Ibid.)

[1] See Mos. Chor. *Hist. Armen.* ii. 74. 'Fanorum religiones præcipue instauravit. . . Statuas autem, quas Valarsaces majoribus suis statuerat, Solisque et Lunæ simulachra, quæ ille . . . Artaxata deportaverat, ea Artasires confregit.'

[2] Pliny calls it 'caput regnorum' (*H. N.* vi. 26); Tacitus, 'sedes imperii' (*Ann.* vi. 26). Dio Cassius describes it as πόλις ἐν ᾗ βασίλεια [οἱ Πάρθοι] ἔχουσι (*Hist. Rom.* xl. 45); Ammianus (xxiii. 6, p. 402), as 'Persidis specimen summum.'

[3] Εἰώθασιν ἐνταῦθα τοῦ χειμῶνος διάγειν οἱ βασιλεῖς διὰ τὸ εὐάερον (xvi. 1, § 16).

[4] *H. N.* vi. 26; § 122.

probable—viz., that it grew up gradually out of the wish of the Parthian kings to spare Seleucia the unpleasantness of having the rude soldiery, which followed the Court from place to place, quartered upon them.[1] The remainder of the year, Strabo tells us, was spent by the Parthian kings either at the Median city of Ecbatana, which is the modern Hamadan, or in the province of Hyrcania.[2] In Hyrcania, the palace, according to him, was at Tapé;[3] and between this place and Ecbatana he no doubt regarded the monarchs as spending the time which was not passed at Ctesiphon. Athenæus, however, declares that Rhagæ was the spring residence of the Parthian kings;[4] and it seems not unlikely that this famous city, which Isidore, writing in Parthian times, calls 'the greatest in Media,'[5] was among the occasional residences of the Court. Parthia itself was, it would seem, deserted;[6] but still a city of that region preserved in one respect a royal character, being the place where all the earlier kings were interred.[7]

The pomp and grandeur of the Parthian monarchs are described only in the vaguest terms by the classical writers. No author of repute appears to have visited the Parthian Court. We may perhaps best obtain a true notion of the splendour of the sovereign from the accounts which have reached us of his relations and

[1] Strab. l.s.c. *Ταύτην ἐποιοῦντο χειμάδιον οἱ τῶν Παρθυαίων βασιλεῖς, φειδόμενοι τῶν Σελευκείων, ἵνα μὴ καταστραθμεύοιντο ὑπὸ τοῦ Σκυθικοῦ φύλου καὶ στρατιωτικοῦ.*

[2] Strab. l.s.c. Compare xi. 13, § 1.

[3] Ibid. xi. 7, § 2.

[4] *Deipnosoph.* xii. 8; p. 514.

[5] *Mans. Parth.* § 7.

[6] An occasional flying visit may have been paid to Hecatompylos, where the old palace of the early kings was maintained at least to the time of Strabo (xi. 9, § 1); but the province was not rich enough to furnish food for the vast numbers of the later Court. (Ibid.)

[7] Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 12. In later times Arbela appears to have become the royal burying-place (D. Cass. lxxviii. 1).

officers, who can have reflected only faintly the magnificence of the sovereign. Plutarch tells us that the general whom Orodes deputed to conduct the war against Crassus came into the field accompanied by two hundred litters wherein were contained his concubines, and by a thousand camels which carried his baggage.[1] His dress was fashioned after that of the Medes; he wore his hair parted in the middle, and had his face painted with cosmetics.[2] A body of ten thousand horse, composed entirely of his clients and slaves, followed him in battle.[3] We may conclude from this picture, and from the general tenor of the classical notices, that the Arsacidæ revived and maintained very much such a Court as that of the old Achæmenian princes, falling probably somewhat below their model in politeness and refinement, but equalling it in luxury, in extravagant expenditure, and in display.

Such seems to have been the general character of those practices and institutions which distinguished the Parthians from the foundation of their Empire by Mithridates. Some of them, it is probable, he rather adopted than invented; but there is no good reason for doubting that of many he was the originator. He appears to have been one of those rare individuals to whom it has been given to unite the powers which form the conqueror with those which constitute the successful organiser of a State. Brave and enterprising in war, prompt to seize an occasion and to turn it to the best advantage, not even averse to severities where they seemed to be required, he yet felt no acrimony towards those who had resisted his arms, but was ready to be-

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[1] Plutarch, *Vit. Crass.* § 21. Comp. Appian, *Parthica*, p. 141, A.

[2] Plut. *Vit. Crass.* § 24.

[3] Ibid. § 21.

friend them so soon as their resistance ceased. Mild, clement, philanthropic,[1] he conciliated those whom he subdued almost more easily than he subdued them, and by the efforts of a few years succeeded in welding together a dominion which lasted without suffering serious mutilation for nearly four centuries. Though not dignified with the epithet of 'Great,' he was beyond all question the greatest of the Parthian monarchs. Later times did him more justice than his contemporaries, and, when the names of almost all the other kings had sunk into oblivion, retained his in honour, and placed it on a par with that of the original founder of Parthian independence.[2]

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[1] Diod. Sic. xxxiii. 20.

[2] See Agathias, who, writing under the Byzantine emperors, ab. A.D. 560–580, thus sums up the Parthian period: Παρθυαῖοι, ἔθνος κατήκοον καὶ ἥκιστα ἐν τῷ πρὸ τοῦ ὀνομαστότατον, παρέλυσαν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοὺς Μακεδόνας. Καὶ εἶτα ἐκεῖνοι τῶν ὅλων πλὴν Αἰγύπτου ἡγοῦντο, Ἀρσάκου μὲν πρότερον τῆς ἀποστάσεως ἀρξαμένου, ὡς καὶ Ἀρσακίδας τοὺς μετ' αὐτὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι, Μιθριδάτου δὲ οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἐς μέγα τι κλέος τὸ Παρθυαίων ὄνομα ἐξενεγκόντος. (*Hist.* ii. 25, ad fin.)

CHAPTER VII.

Reign of Phraates II. Expedition of Antiochus Sidetes against Parthia. Release of Demetrius. Defeat and Death of Sidetes. War of Phraates with the Northern Nomads. His death and character.

'Post necem Mithridatis, Parthorum regis, Phrahates filius ejus rex constituitur.'—Justin, xlii. 1, § 1.

MITHRIDATES was succeeded by his son, Phraates, the second monarch of the name, and the seventh Arsaces. This prince, entertaining, like his father, the design of invading Syria, and expecting to find some advantage from having in his camp the rightful occupant of the Syrian throne,[1] treated the captive Demetrius with even greater kindness than his father had done, not only maintaining him handsomely, but even giving him his sister, Rhodoguné, in marriage.[2] Demetrius, however, was not to be reconciled to his captivity by any such blandishments, and employed his thoughts chiefly in devising plans by which he might escape. By the help of a friend, he twice managed to evade the vigilance of his guards, and to make his way from Hyrcania towards the frontiers of his own kingdom; but each time he was pursued and caught without effecting his purpose.[3] The Parthian monarch was no doubt vexed at his pertinacity, and on the second occasion thought it prudent to feign, if he did not even really feel, offence: he banished his ungrateful brother-in-law from his

[1] Justin, xxxviii. 9, § 10.

[2] Appian, *Syriac.* p. 132, A. Justin, however, makes the marriage take place in the reign of Mithridates (xxxviii. 9, § 3).

[3] Justin, § 4–8.

presence,[1] but otherwise visited his crime with no severer penalty than ridicule. Choosing to see in his attempts to change the place of his abode no serious design, but only the wayward conduct of a child, he sent him a present of some golden dice, implying thereby that it was only for lack of amusement he had grown discontented with his Hyrcanian residence.[2]

Antiochus Sidetes, the brother of Demetrius, had been generally accepted by the Syrians as their monarch, at the time when the news reached them of that prince's defeat and capture by Mithridates. He was an active and enterprising sovereign, though fond of luxury and display. For some years (B.C. 140—137) the pretensions of Tryphon to the throne gave him full occupation;[3] but, having finally established his authority after a short war, and punished the pretender with death, he found himself, in B.C. 137, at liberty to turn his arms against foreign enemies. He would probably have at once attacked Parthia, but for the attitude of a nearer neighbour, which he regarded as menacing, and as requiring his immediate attention. Demetrius, before his departure for the East, had rewarded the Jews for services rendered him in his war with Tryphon by an open acknowledgment of their independence.[4] Sidetes, though indebted to the Jewish High Priest, Simon, for offers of aid against the same adversary,[5] could not bring himself to pay the price for it which Demetrius had thought reasonable—an independent Palestine appeared to him a danger close to his doors, and one that imperilled the very existence of the Syrian State. Ac-

[1] 'Ut invisus, a conspectu submovetur' (Ibid.).

[2] 'Talis aureis ad exprobrationem puerilis levitatis donatur' (Ibid.).

[3] 1 Mac. xv. 10–25; Appian, *Syriac.* p. 132, B.

[4] 1 Mac. xiii. 36–42.

[5] Ibid. xv. 26.

cordingly, he had no sooner put down Tryphon than he resolved to pick a quarrel with the Jews, and to force them to resume their old position of vassalage to Syria.[1] His general, Cendebæus, invaded their country, but was defeated near Azotus.[2] Antiochus had to take the field in person.[3] During two years, John Hyrcanus, who had succeeded his father, Simon (B.C. 135), baffled all his efforts; but at last, in B.C. 133, he was forced to submit, to acknowledge the authority of Syria, to dismantle Jerusalem, and to resume the payment of tribute. Sidetes then considered the time come for a Parthian expedition, and having made great preparations, he set out for the East in the spring of B.C. 129.

It is impossible to accept without considerable reserve the accounts that have come down to us of the force which Antiochus collected. According to Justin[4] it consisted of no more than 80,000 fighting men, to which was attached the incredible number of 300,000 camp-followers, the majority being composed of cooks, bakers, and actors. As in other extreme cases the camp-followers do but equal or a little exceed the number of men fit for service,[5] this estimate, which makes them nearly four times as numerous, is entitled to but little credit. The late writer, Orosius,[6] corrects the error here indicated; but his account seems to err in rating the supernumeraries too low. According to him, the armed force amounted to 300,000, while the camp-followers, including grooms, suttlers, courtesans, and actors, were no more than a

[1] 1 Mac. xv. 28–36.
[2] Ibid. xvi. 8–10.
[3] Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 18; Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xiii. 8, § 2.
[4] Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 2.
[5] See Herod. vii. 186; Tacit. *Hist.* iii. 33, &c.
[6] Orosius wrote about A.D. 420. His chronology is exceedingly confused, but he occasionally preserves in his details important facts, which he has obtained from earlier writers. The passage here referred to is in Book v. ch. 10.

third of the number. From the two accounts, taken together, we are perhaps entitled to conclude that the entire host did not fall much short of 400,000 men. This estimate receives confirmation from an independent statement made by Diodorus, with respect to the number who fell in the campaign—a statement of which we shall have to speak later.[1]

The army of Phraates, according to two accounts of it[2] (which, however, seem to represent a single original authority), numbered no more than 120,000. An attempt which he made to enlist in his service a body of Scythian mercenaries failed, the Scyths being willing to lend their aid, but arriving too late to be of any use.[3] At the same time a defection of the subject princes[4] deprived the Parthian monarch of contingents which usually swelled his numbers, and threw him upon the support of his own countrymen, chiefly or solely. Under these circumstances it is more surprising that he was able to collect 120,000 men than that he did not bring into the field a larger number.

The Syrian troops, magnificently appointed[5] and supported by a body of Jews under John Hyrcanus,[6] advanced upon Babylon, receiving on their way the adhesion of many of the Parthian tributaries, who professed themselves disgusted by the arrogance and pride of their masters.[7] Phraates, on his part, advanced to meet his enemies, and in person or by his generals

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[1] See below, p. 105.

[2] Porphyr. ap. Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 18; Mos. Chor. *Hist. Armen.* ii. 2.

[3] Justin, xlii. 1, § 2.

[4] Ibid. xxxviii. 10, § 5.

[5] According to Justin, the common soldiers had their military boots fastened with gold (compare Val. Max. ix. 1), and their cooking utensils were of silver.

[6] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xiii. 8. The presence of Hyrcanus is confirmed by Nicolas of Damascus (Fr. 74).

[7] 'Cum execratione superbiæ Parthicæ' (Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 5).

engaged Antiochus in three battles, but without success. Antiochus was three times a conqueror. In a battle fought upon the river Lycus (Zab) in further Assyria he defeated the Parthian general, Indates, and raised a trophy in honour of his victory.[1] The exact scene of the other combats is unknown, but they were probably in the same neighbourhood. The result of them was the conquest of Babylonia, and the general revolt of the remaining Parthian provinces,[2] which followed the common practice of deserting a falling house, and drew off or declared for the enemy.

Under these circumstances Phraates, considering that the time was come when it was necessary for him to submit or to create a diversion by raising troubles in the enemy's territory, released Demetrius from his confinement, and sent him, supported by a body of Parthian troops, to reclaim his kingdom.[3] He thought it probable that Antiochus, when the intelligence reached him, would retrace his steps, and return from Babylon to his own capital. At any rate his efforts would be distracted; he would be able to draw fewer reinforcements from home; and he would be less inclined to proceed to any great distance from his own country.

Antiochus, however, was either uninformed of the impending danger or did not regard it as very pressing. The winter was approaching; and, instead of withdrawing his troops from the occupied provinces and marching them back into Syria, he resolved to keep them where they were, merely dividing them, on account of their numbers, among the various cities which he had taken, and making them go into winter quarters.[4] It

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[1] Nic. Dam. Fr. 74.
[2] Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 6.
[3] Porphyr. ap. Euseb. *Chron. Can.* l.s.c.; Appian, *Syriac.* p. 132, B; Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 7.
[4] Justin, § 8.

was, no doubt, his intention to remain quiet during the two or three winter months, after which he would have resumed the war, and have endeavoured to penetrate through Media into Parthia Proper, where he might expect his adversary to make his last stand.

But Phraates saw that the position of affairs was favourable for striking a blow before the spring came. The dispersion of his enemy's troops deprived him of all advantage from the superiority of their numbers. The circumstance of their being quartered in towns newly reduced, and unaccustomed to the rudeness and rapacity of soldiers and camp-followers, made it almost certain that complications would arise, and that it would not be long before in some places the Parthians, so lately declared to be oppressors, would be hailed as liberators. Moreover, the Parthians were, probably, better able than their adversaries to endure the hardships and severities of a campaign in the cold season.[1] Parthia is a cold country, and the winters, both of the great plateau of Iran and of all the mountain tracts adjoining it, are severe. The climate of Syria is far milder. Moreover, the troops of Antiochus had, we are informed, been enervated by an excessive indulgence on the part of their leader during the marches and halts of the preceding summer.[2] Their appetites had been pampered; their habits had become un-

[1] Dio (xl. 46) speaks of the Parthians as disinclined to make war in winter, because a damp air relaxed their bow-strings. But physically, they were as capable of enduring the winter cold as the summer heats.

[2] According to Posidonius, Antiochus in this expedition 'feasted daily vast crowds of his men, and allowed his guests not only to consume as much as they would, but even to carry away with them from the banquet, birds, beasts, and fish that had not been touched, to the extent of a waggon-load each banquet; in addition to which he presented them with honey-cakes and garlands scented with myrrh and frankincense tied with golden strings six feet long' (Fr. 17).

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manly; their general tone was relaxed; and they were likely to deteriorate still more in the wealthy and luxurious cities where they were bidden to pass the winter.

These various circumstances raised the spirits of Phraates, and made him hold himself in readiness to resume hostilities at a moment's notice. Nor was it long before the complications which he had foreseen began to occur. The insolence of the soldiers[1] quartered upon them exasperated the inhabitants of the Mesopotamian towns, and caused them to look back with regret to the time when they were Parthian subjects. The requisitions made on them for stores of all kinds was a further grievance.[2] After a while they opened communications with Phraates, and offered to return to their allegiance if he would assist them against their oppressors. Phraates gladly listened to these overtures. At his instigation, a plot was formed like that which has given so terrible a significance to the phrase 'Sicilian vespers.' It was agreed that on an appointed day all the cities should break out in revolt; the natives should take arms, rise against the soldiers quartered upon them, and kill all, or as many as possible. Phraates promised to be at hand with his army, to prevent the scattered detachments from giving help to each other. It was calculated that in this way the invaders might be cut off almost to a man without the trouble of even fighting a battle.

But, before he proceeded to extremities, the Parthian prince determined to give his adversary a chance of

[1] See Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 8; and compare Diodorus (xxxv. 17, § 2), where Athenæus, one of the generals of Antiochus, is said to have distinguished himself by behaving worse than others towards those on whom he was quartered, and to have suffered for it afterwards.

[2] Justin, l.s.c.

escaping the fate prepared for him by timely concessions. The winter was not over; but the snow was beginning to melt through the increasing warmth of the sun's rays,[1] and the day appointed for the general rising was probably drawing near. Phraates felt that no time was to be lost. Accordingly, he sent ambassadors to Antiochus to propose peace, and to inquire on what conditions it would be granted him. The reply of Antiochus, according to Diodorus, was as follows:—'If Phraates would release his prisoner, Demetrius, from captivity, and deliver him up without ransom,[2] at the same time restoring all the provinces which had been taken from Syria, and consenting to pay a tribute for Parthia itself, peace might be had; but not otherwise.' To such terms it was, of course, impossible that Phraates should listen; and his ambassadors, therefore, returned without further parley.

Soon afterwards the day appointed for the outbreak arrived. Apparently, no suspicion had been excited. The Syrian troops were everywhere quietly enjoying themselves in their winter quarters, when, suddenly and without warning, they found themselves attacked by the natives.[3] Taken at disadvantage, it was im-

[1] This seems the only way of reconciling Diodorus (xxxv. 15) with Porphyry (ap. Euseb. l.s.c.) and Moses of Chorene (ii. 2). The last two distinctly state that the battle in which Antiochus fell was fought in the winter. Diodorus, on the other hand, speaks of the spring warmth as having begun to melt the snow, when Phraates sent his embassy.

[2] It would appear from this that Demetrius was either not yet released, or not known to be at large by his brother. Probably the order to release him was sent to Hyrcania at the beginning of the winter; but it may well be that it could not be executed immediately. The severity of the weather makes travelling very difficult on the high plateau during December and January; and it would have been especially hard to cross the Zagros range during this season. Demetrius may not have reached Syria till February, and Antiochus may, therefore, not have known that he was at liberty.

[3] Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 8. 'Die statuta omnes apud se divisum exercitum per insidias, ne invicem ferre auxilia possent, aggrediuntur.'

possible for them to make a successful resistance; and it would seem that the great bulk of them were massacred in their quarters. Antiochus, and the detachment stationed with him, alone, so far as we hear, escaped into the open field and contended for their lives in just warfare.[1] It had been the intention of the Syrian monarch, when he took the field, to hasten to the protection of the troops quartered nearest to him; but he no sooner commenced his march than he found himself confronted by Phraates, who was at the head of his entire army, having, no doubt, anticipated Antiochus's design and resolved to frustrate it. The Parthian prince was anxious to engage at once, as his force far outnumbered that commanded by his adversary; but the latter might have declined the battle, if he had so willed, and have, at any rate, greatly protracted the struggle. He had a mountain region—Mount Zagros, probably—within a short distance of him, and might have fallen back upon it, so placing the Parthian horse at great disadvantage; but he was still at an age when caution is apt to be considered cowardice, and temerity to pass for true courage. Despite the advice of one of his captains, he determined to accept the battle which the enemy offered, and not to fly before a foe whom he had three times defeated.[2] But the determination of the commander was ill seconded by his army. Though Antiochus fought strenuously,[3] he was defeated, since his troops were without heart and offered but a poor resistance.[4] Antiochus himself perished, either slain by

[1] Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 9; Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 16.

[2] Diod. Sic. l.s.c.

[3] 'Ανεδέχετο τὴν τῶν βαρβάρων ἔφοδον εὐρώστως, says Diodorus. 'Fortius, quam exercitus ejus, dimicavit,' says Justin.

[4] 'Metu suorum desertus, occiditur' (Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 10). Athenæus, the general who had advised retreat, was the first to fly. (Diod. Sic. l.s.c.)

the enemy or by his own hand.[1] His son, Seleucus, a boy of tender age,[2] and his niece, a daughter of Demetrius,[3] who had accompanied him in his expedition, were captured. His troops were either cut to pieces, or made prisoners. The entire number of those slain in the battle, and in the previous massacre, was reckoned at 300,000.[4]

Such was the issue of this great expedition. It was the last which any Seleucid monarch conducted into these countries—the final attempt made by Syria to repossess herself of her lost Eastern provinces. Henceforth, Parthia was no further troubled by the power that had hitherto been her most dangerous enemy, but was allowed to enjoy without molestation from Syria the conquests which she had effected. Syria, in fact, had from this time a difficulty in preserving her own existence. The immediate result of the destruction of Antiochus and his host was the revolt of Judæa,[5] which henceforth maintained its independence uninterruptedly. The dominions of the Seleucidæ were reduced to Cilicia and Syria Proper,[6] or the tract west of the Euphrates, between Amanus and Palestine. Internally, the state was agitated by constant commotions from the claims of various pretenders to the sovereignty: externally, it was kept in continual alarm by the Egyptians, Arabians, or Romans. During the sixty years[7] which elapsed between the return of Demetrius to his king-

[1] Justin, Porphyry, Josephus, and Orosius say that he was slain; Appian (*Syriac.* p. 132, B), and Ælian (*Hist. An.* x. 34) declare that he killed himself.

[2] Porphyr. ap. Euseb. *Chron. Can.* xl 18.

[3] Justin, l.s.c.

[4] Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 17, § 1.

[5] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xiii. 9.

[6] Cilicia was lost B.C. 102. The towns on the coast, Tyre, Sidon, Seleucia, &c., about the same time assumed independence.

[7] The *exact* time was sixty-three years, from the spring of B.C. 128 to B.C. 65.

dom and the conversion of Syria into a Roman province, she ceased wholly to be formidable to her neighbours. Her flourishing period was gone by, and a rapid decline set in, from which there was no recovery. It is surprising that the Romans did not step in earlier and terminate a rule which was but a little removed from anarchy. Rome, however, had other work on her hands; and the Syrian kingdom continued to exist till B.C. 65, though in a feeble and moribund condition.

But Phraates could not, without prophetic foresight, have counted on such utter prostration following as the result of a single—albeit a terrible—blow. Accordingly, we find him still exhibiting a dread of the Seleucid power even after his great victory. He had released Demetrius too late to obtain any benefit from the hostile feeling which that prince probably entertained towards his brother. Had he not released him too soon for his own safety? Was it not to be feared that the Syrians might rally under one who was their natural leader, might rapidly recover their strength, and renew the struggle for the mastery of Western Asia? The first thought of the dissatisfied monarch was to hinder the execution of his own project. Demetrius was on his way to Syria, but had not yet arrived there, or, at any rate, his arrival had not been as yet reported. Was it not possible to intercept him? The Parthian king hastily sent out a body of horse, with orders to pursue the Syrian prince at their best speed, and endeavour to capture him before he passed the frontier.[1] If they succeeded, they were to bring him back to their master, who would probably have then

[1] Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 11.

committed his prisoner to close custody. The pursuit, however, failed. Demetrius had anticipated, or at least feared, a change of purpose, and, having prosecuted his journey with the greatest diligence, had reached his own territory before the emissaries of Phraates could overtake him.[1]

It is uncertain whether policy or inclination dictated the step which Phraates soon afterwards took of allying himself by marriage with the Seleucidæ. He had formerly given his sister, Rhodoguné, as a wife to Demetrius,[2] and the marriage had been fruitful, Rhodoguné having borne Demetrius several children.[3] The two houses of the Seleucidæ and Arsacidæ were thus already allied to some extent. Phraates resolved to strengthen the bond. The unmarried daughter of Demetrius whom he had captured after his victory over Antiochus took his fancy; and he determined to make her his wife.[4] At the same time he adopted other measures calculated to conciliate the Seleucid prince. He treated his captive, Seleucus, the son of Antiochus, with the greatest respect.[5] To the corpse of Antiochus he paid royal honours;[6] and, having placed it in a silver coffin, he transmitted it to the Syrians for sepulture.[7]

Still, if we may believe Justin,[8] he entertained the design of carrying his arms across the Euphrates and invading Syria, in order to avenge the attack of Antio-

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[1] Justin, l.s.c.

[2] See above, p. 96.

[3] Justin, xxxviii. 9, § 8.

[4] Ibid. xxxviii. 10, § 10.

[5] Porphyr. ap. Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 18. 'Seleucum Arsaces captivum abduxit, *regioque more* custodiendum curavit.'

[6] Justin, l.s.c. 'Exsequias *regio more* fecit.'

[7] Ibid. xxxix. 1, § 6.

[8] Ibid. xlii. 1, § 1. The statement is confirmed by Diodorus (xxxiv. 18), who says that Phraates expected to make himself master of Syria with ease (ἐλπίζων ῥαδίως αὐτῆς κυριεύσειν).

chus upon his territories. But events occurred which forced him to relinquish this enterprise. The Scythians, whom he had called to his aid under the pressure of the Syrian invasion, and who had arrived too late to take part in the war, demanded the pay which they had been promised, and suggested that their arms should be employed against some other enemy.[1] Phraates was unwilling either to requite services not rendered, or to rush needlessly into a fresh war merely to gratify the avarice of his auxiliaries. He therefore peremptorily refused to comply with either suggestion. Upon this, the Scythians determined to take their payment into their own hands, and began to ravage Parthia and to carry off a rich booty. Phraates, who had removed the head-quarters of his government to Babylonia, felt it necessary to entrust affairs there to an officer, and to take the field in person against this new enemy, which was certainly not less formidable than the Syrians. He selected for his representative at the seat of Empire a certain Himerus[2] (or Evemerus),[3] a youth with whom he had a disgraceful connection, and having established him as a sort of viceroy,[4] marched away to the north-east, and proceeded to encounter the Scythians in that remote region. Besides his native troops, he took with him a number of Greeks, whom he had made prisoners in his war with Antiochus.[5] Their fidelity could not but be doubtful; probably, however, he thought that at a distance from Syria they would not dare to fail him, and that with an enemy so barbarous as the

[1] Justin, xlii. 1, § 2.
[2] Ibid. § 3; Posidon. Fr. 21.
[3] Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 21.
[4] Himerus is called 'king of the Parthians' by Diodorus—an expression which requires explanation rather than correction. Posidonius speaks of him as τὸν τυραννήσαντα Βαβυλωνίων (Fr. 21). According to Justin (xlii. 2, § 3), he was Phraates' *vicarius*.
[5] Justin, xlii. 1, § 4.

Scythians they would have no temptation to fraternise. But the event proved him mistaken. The Greeks were sullen at their captivity, and exasperated by some cruel treatment which they had received when first captured. They bided their time; and when, in a battle with the Scythians, they saw the Parthian soldiery hard pressed and in danger of defeat, they decided matters by going over in a body to the enemy. The Parthian army was completely routed and destroyed, and Phraates himself was among the slain.[1] We are not told what became of the victorious Greeks; but it is to be presumed that, like the Ten Thousand, they fought their way across Asia, and rejoined their own countrymen.

Thus died Phraates I., after a reign of about eight or nine years.[2] Though not possessing the talents of his father, he was a brave and warlike prince, active, enterprising, fertile in resources, and bent on maintaining against all assailants the honour and integrity of the Empire. In natural temperament he was probably at once soft[3] and cruel.[4] But, when policy required it, he could throw his softness aside and show himself a hardy and intrepid warrior.[5] Similarly, he could control his natural harshness, and act upon occasion with clemency and leniency.[6] He was not, perhaps, without

[1] Ibid. § 5.

[2] The accession of Phraates II. is fixed by various considerations to about the year B.C. 136. His death must have taken place in B.C. 128 or B.C. 127.

[3] Indications of this are his relations with Himerus (*supra*, p. 108), and the rapidity with which he fell in love with Demetrius' daughter (Justin, xxxviii. 10, § 10).

[4] The natural cruelty of Phraates is shown, 1, in his treatment of his Greek captives ('exercitum Græcorum superbe *crudeliterque* tractaverat,' Justin, xlii. 1, § 4); 2, in his feelings towards the people of Seleucia (ἀλλοτρίως πρὸς Σελευκεῖς διακείμενος καὶ μνησικακῶν, Diod. Sic. xxxiv. 19); and perhaps 3, in his appointment of Himerus, whose severities he must have countenanced or at least permitted.

[5] Note especially his winter campaign against Antiochus (*supra*, p. 104).

[6] As in his treatment of Demetrius after his two escapes, in his

a grim humour, which led him to threaten more than he intended, in order to see how men would comport themselves when greatly alarmed.[1] There is some evidence that he aimed at saying good things; though it must be confessed that the wit is not of a high order.[2] Altogether, he has more character than most Oriental monarchs; and the monotony of Arsacid biography is agreeably interrupted by the idiosyncrasy which his words and conduct indicate.

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conduct towards Seleucus, Antiochus' son, and (in a less degree) in his treatment of Antiochus' body.

[1] This is the impression raised by the story which Diodorus tells about the Seleucenses. 'The Seleucenses,' he says, 'understanding that Arsaces was angry with them, sent ambassadors to deprecate his wrath, and bade them be sure to bring back an answer from the king. So Arsaces took the ambassadors to the place where Pitthides, a man whose eyes had been put out, was wont to sit, and said—"Tell the men of Seleucia that they all deserve the fate of Pitthides!"' As it does not appear that Phraates took any steps to carry out his threat, it can scarcely have been serious.

[2] Besides the above story, there is an anecdote of Phraates told by Posidonius, which deserves to be noticed. 'When Antiochus, who made war upon Arsaces,' he says, 'was dead, and the latter was occupying himself about his funeral, he exclaimed, "Oh, Antiochus, thy rashness and thy intemperance were thy ruin; in thy mighty cups thou thoughtest to swallow down the kingdom of the Arsacidæ!"' (Posid. Fr. 20.)

CHAPTER VIII.

Accession of Artabanus II. Position of Parthia. Growing pressure upon her, and general advance towards the south, of the Saka or Scyths. Causes and extent of the movement. Character and principal tribes of the Saka. Scythic war of Artabanus. His death.

'Imperium Asiæ [Scythæ] ter quæsivere.'—Justin, ii. 3, § 1.

THE successor of Phraates was his uncle, Artabanus,[1] a son of Priapatius. It is probable that the late king had either left no son, or none of sufficient age to be a fit occupant of the throne at a season of difficulty. The 'Megistanes,' therefore, elected Artabanus in his nephew's place,[2] a man of mature age,[3] and, probably, of some experience in war. The situation of Parthia, despite her recent triumph over the Syro-Macedonians, was critical; and it was of the greatest importance that the sceptre should be committed to one who would bring to the discharge of his office those qualities of wisdom, promptness, and vigour, which a crisis demands.

The difficulty of the situation was two-fold. In the first place, there was an immediate danger to be escaped. The combined Greeks and Scythians, who had defeated the Parthian army and slain the monarch, might have been expected to push their advantage to

[1] Justin, xlii. 2, § 1.

[2] Justin's phrase ('In hujus locum Artabanus, patruus ejus, rex *substituitur*') implies their election, which, besides, we know to have been the regular course of procedure. (See above, p. 85.)

[3] As Priapatius died in or about B.C. 181, Artabanus could not in B.C. 127 be less than fifty-four years of age.

the utmost, and seek to establish themselves as conquerors in the country which lay apparently at their mercy. At any rate, the siege and sack of some of the chief towns was a probable contingency, if permanent occupation of the territory did not suit the views of the confederates. The new monarch had to rid Parthia of her invaders at as little cost as possible, before he could allow himself to turn his attention to any other matter whatsoever. Nor did this, under the circumstances, appear to be an easy task. The flower of the Parthian troops had been destroyed in the late battle, and it was not easy to replace them by another native army. The subject-nations were at no time to be depended upon when Parthia was reduced to straits, and at the present conjuncture some of the most important were in a condition bordering upon rebellion. Himerus, the viceroy left by Phraates in Babylonia, had first driven the Babylonians and Seleucians to desperation by his tyranny,[1] and then plunged into a war with the people of Mesêné,[2] which must have made it difficult for him to send Artabanus any contingent. Fortunately for the Parthians, the folly, or moderation, of their enemies rendered any great effort on their part unnecessary. The Greeks, content with having revenged themselves, gave the new monarch no trouble

[1] The tyranny of this governor is witnessed to in a general way by Justin (xlii. 1, § 3), and Posidonius (Fr. 21). Some particulars of it are given by Diodorus. 'Evemerus,' he says, 'the Parthian king, was a Hyrcanian by race, and exceeded in cruelty all other tyrants on record. There was no form of punishment which he omitted to use. On accusations of a trivial character he condemned many of the Babylonians to slavery, and sent them with their families into Media to be publicly sold. He burnt the market-place of Babylon, and several of the temples, destroying at the same time the finest portion of the city.'

[2] Trog. Pomp. Prolog. lib. xlii. 'Ut præfectus Parthis a Phraate Mesenis bellum intulit.' Mesêné was the tract between Babylonia and the sea; it had probably not yet been made subject to Parthia.

at all: the Scythians were satisfied with plundering and wasting the open country, after which they returned quietly to their homes.[1] Artabanus found himself quit of the immediate danger which had threatened him almost without exertion of his own, and could now bend his thoughts to the position of his country generally, and the proper policy to pursue under the circumstances.

For there was a second and more formidable danger impending over the State—a danger not casual and temporary like the one just escaped, but arising out of a condition of things in neighbouring regions which had come about slowly, and which promised to be permanent. To give the reader the means of estimating this danger aright, it will be necessary to take a somewhat wide view of the state of affairs on the northern and north-eastern frontiers of Parthia for some time previously to the accession of Artabanus, to trace out the causes which were at work, producing important changes in these regions, and to indicate the results which threatened, and those which were accomplished. The opportunity will also serve for giving such an account of the chief races which here bordered the empire, as will show the nature of the peril to which Parthia was exposed at this period.

In the wide plains of Northern Asia, extending from the Arctic Ocean to the Thian Chan mountains and the Jaxartes, there had been nurtured from a remote antiquity a nomadic population, at no time very numerous in proportion to the area over which it was spread, but liable on occasions to accumulate, owing to a combination of circumstances, in this or that

[1] Justin, xlii. 2, § 1. 'Scythæ autem contenti victoria, depopulata Parthia, in patriam revertuntur.'

portion of the region occupied, and at such times causing trouble to its neighbours. From about the close of the third century B. C., symptoms of such an accumulation had begun to display themselves in the tract immediately north of the Jaxartes, and the inhabitants of the countries south of that river had suffered from a succession of raids and inroads, which were not regarded as dangerous, but which gave constant annoyance. Crossing the great desert of Kharesm by forced marches, some of the hordes invaded the green valleys of Hyrcania and Parthia, and carried desolation over those fair and flourishing districts.[1] About the same time other tribes entered the Bactrian territory and caused alarm to the Greek kingdom recently established in that province.[2] It appears that the Parthian monarchs, unable to save their country from incursions, consented to pay a sort of black mail to their invaders, by allowing them the use of their pasture grounds at certain fixed times—probably during some months of each year.[3] The Bactrian princes had to pay a heavier penalty. Province after province of their kingdom was swallowed up by the northern hordes,[4] who gradually occupied Sogdiana, or the tract between the lower Jaxartes and the lower Oxus, whence they proceeded to make inroads into Bactria itself. The rich land on the Poly-

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[1] Strab. xi. 8, § 3.

[2] That the pressure of the nomadic hordes on Bactria began as early as the reign of Euthydemus (B.C. 220–200), appears from his representations to Antiochus (Polyb. xi. 34, § 5).

[3] Strab. l.s.c. Οἱ δὲ συνέθεντο φόρους· φόρος δ' ἦν τὸ ἐπιτρέπειν τακτοῖς τισι χρόνοις τὴν χώραν κατατρέχειν καὶ φέρεσθαι λείαν. I understand this as a pasture right similar to that claimed by the Samnites in Campania (Arnold, *Hist. of Rome*, vol. ii. p. 108), only enjoyed at a different time of the year.

[4] Strab. xi. 8, § 2 and § 4; Trog. Pomp. Prol. lib. xli.

timetus, or Ak Su, the river of Samarkand, and even the highlands between the upper Jaxartes and upper Oxus, were permanently occupied by the invaders; and if the Bactrians had not compensated themselves for their losses by acquisitions of territory in Affghanistan and India, they would soon have had no kingdom left. The hordes were always increasing in strength through the influx of fresh immigrants, and in lieu of Bactria a power now stood arrayed on the north-eastern frontier of the Parthians, which was reasonably regarded with the most serious alarm and suspicion.

The origin of the state of things here described is to be sought, according to the best authorities, in certain movements which took place about B. C. 200,[1] in a remote region of inner Asia. At that time a Turanian people called the Yue-chi were expelled from their territory on the west of Chen-si by the Hiong-nu, whom some identify with the Huns. 'The Yue-chi separated into two bands: the smaller descended southwards into Thibet; the larger passed westwards, and after a hard struggle dispossessed a people called "Su" of the plains west of the river of Ili. These latter advanced to Ferghana and the Jaxartes; and the Yue-chi not long afterwards retreating from the U-siun, another nomadic race, passed the "Su" on the north and occupied the tracts between the Oxus and the Caspian. The Su were thus in the vicinity of the Bactrian Greeks; the Yue-chi in the neighbourhood of the Parthians.'[2] On the particulars of this account,

[1] This is the date given. (See Wilson, *Ariana Ant.* p. 303.) It does not pretend to exactness; and we may perhaps conclude from the words of Euthydemus (see above, p. 114, note 2), which were spoken B.C. 205, that the movement commenced seven or eight years earlier.

[2] Wilson, l.s.c.

which comes from the Chinese historians, we cannot perhaps altogether depend; but there is no reason to doubt the main fact, attested by a writer who visited the Yue-chi in B. C. 139,[1] that they had migrated about the period mentioned from the interior of Asia, and had established themselves sixty years later in the Caspian region. Such a movement would necessarily have thrown the entire previous population of those parts into commotion, and would probably have precipitated them upon their neighbours. It accounts satisfactorily for the pressure of the northern hordes at this period on the Parthians, Bactrians, and even the Indians; and it completely explains the crisis in Parthian history, which we have now reached, and the necessity which lay upon the nation of meeting, and, if possible, overcoming, an entirely new danger.

In fact, one of those occasions of peril had arisen, to which in ancient times the civilised world was always liable from an outburst of northern barbarism. Whether the peril has altogether passed away or not, we need not here inquire; but certainly in the old world there was always a chance that civilisation, art, refinement, luxury, might suddenly and almost without warning be swept away by an overwhelming influx of savage hordes from the unpolished North. From the reign of Cyaxares, when the evil first showed itself,[2] the

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[1] The Chinese authority for the history of this migration is a certain Chang-kian, who was sent on a mission from China to the Yue-chi in B.C. 139, and returned to his native country in B.C. 126.

[2] The great Scythian invasion in the reign of Cyaxares (ab. B.C. 630) is a well-attested fact of history. (See Herod. i. 103-5; iv. 1; Strab. i. 3, § 21; xi. 8, § 4; Euseb. *Chron. Can.* ii. p. 227; Oros. i. 19; Syncell. p. 214, C; &c.) It is the first invasion of the kind that can be regarded as certain, Justin's story of a Scythic conquest of Asia in the time of Sesostris (ii. 3, § 15; cf. Strab. xv. 1, § 6) being probably apocryphal.

danger was patent to all wise and far-seeing governors both in Europe and Asia, and was from time to time guarded against. The expeditions of Cyrus against the Massagetæ, of Darius Hystaspis against the European Scyths, of Alexander against the Getæ, of Trajan and Probus across the Danube, were designed to check and intimidate the northern nations, to break their power, and diminish the likelihood of their taking the offensive. It was now more than four centuries since in this part of Asia any such effort had been made;[1] and the northern barbarians might naturally have ceased to fear the arms and discipline of the South. Moreover the circumstances of the time scarcely left them a choice. Pressed on continually more and more by the newly-arrived Su and Yue-chi, the old inhabitants of the Transoxianian regions were under the necessity of seeking new settlements, and could only attempt to find them in the quarter towards which they were driven by the new-comers. Strengthened, probably, by daring spirits from among their conquerors themselves,[2] they crossed the rivers and the deserts by which they had been hitherto confined, and advancing against the Parthians, Bactrians, and Arians, threatened to carry all before them. We have seen how successful they were against the Bactrians.[3] In Ariana, they passed the mountains, and, proceeding southwards, occupied the tract below the great lake wherein the Helmend terminates, which took from them the name of Sacastané[4] ('land of the

[1] The attack made by Cyrus on the Massagetæ belongs to the year B.C. 559.

[2] The Chinese regard the conquests as made by the Su and the Yue-chi. In migratory movements, the expelled people are constantly led by individuals of the race that has expelled them.

[3] See above, p. 115.

[4] This name is first found in Isidore of Charax, who belongs probably to the Augustan age.

Saka,' or Scyths)—a name still to be traced in the modern 'Seistan.' Further to the east, they effected a lodgment in Kabul, and another in the southern portion of the Indus valley, which for a time bore the name of Indo-Scythia.[1] They even crossed the Indus and attempted to penetrate into the interior of India, but here they were met and repulsed by a native monarch, about the year B.C. 56.[2]

The people engaged in this great movement are called, in a general way, by the classical writers, Sacæ, or Scythæ—i.e., Scyths. They consisted of a number of tribes, similar for the most part in language, habits, and mode of life, and allied more or less closely to the other nomadic races of Central and Northern Asia. Of these tribes the principal were the Massagetæ ('great Jits, or Jats'), who occupied the country on both sides of the lower course of the Oxus;[3] the Dahæ, who bordered the Caspian above Hyrcania, and extended thence to the latitude of Herat;[4] the Tochari,[5] who settled in the mountains between the upper Jaxartes and the upper Oxus, where they gave name to the tract known as Tokharestan; the Asii, or Asiani, who were closely connected with the Tochari;[6] and the Sakaraŭli (Saraucæ?), who are found connected with both the Tochari and the Asiani.[7] Some of these tribes contained within them further sub-divisions; e.g. the Dahæ, who comprised the Parni (or Aparni), the Pissuri, and the Xanthii;[8] and the Massagetæ, who included among them Chorasmii, Attasii, and others.[9]

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[1] Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 302, 305, 347, &c.
[2] Ibid. p. 302.
[3] Strab. xi. 8, § 8.
[4] Ibid. § 2.
[5] See Trog. Pomp. Prol. lib. xlii.; Justin, xlii. 2, § 2; Strab. l.s.c.; Dionys. Perieg. 752.
[6] Trogus said that the Asiani at one time furnished kings to the Tochari. (Prol. lib. xlii. *ad fin.*)
[7] Strab. l.s.c.; Trog. Pomp. Prol. lib. xli.
[8] Strab. l.s.c.
[9] Ibid. xi. 8, § 8.

The general character of the barbarism, in which these various races were involved, may be best learnt from the description given of one of them, the Massagetæ, with but few differences, by Herodotus[1] and Strabo.[2] According to this description, the Massagetæ were nomads, who moved about in wagons or carts, accompanied by their flocks and herds, on whose milk they chiefly sustained themselves. Each man had only one wife, but all the wives were held in common. They were good riders and excellent archers, but fought both on horseback and on foot, and used, besides their bows and arrows, lances, knives, and battle-axes. They had little or no iron, but made their spear and arrow-heads, and their other weapons, of bronze. They had also bronze breast-plates; but otherwise the metal with which they adorned and protected their own persons, and the heads of their horses, was gold. To a certain extent they were cannibals.[3] It was their custom not to let the aged among them die a natural death, but, when life seemed approaching its natural term, to offer them up in sacrifice, and then boil the flesh and feast on it. This mode of ending life was regarded as the best and most honourable; such as died of disease were not eaten but buried, and their friends bewailed their misfortune.

It may be added to this, that we have sufficient reason to believe that the Massagetæ and the other nomads of these parts regarded the use of poisoned arrows as legitimate in warfare, and employed the venom of serpents, and the corrupted blood of

[1] Herod. i. 215, 216.

[2] Strab. xi. 8, § 6.

[3] That the Massagetæ were not the only cannibals among the nomadic hordes of these parts, appears from Pliny, who notes the same feature in the Tochari ('Tochari . . . humanis corporibus vescuntur.' *H. N.* vi. 17.)

man, to make the wounds which they inflicted more deadly.[1]

Thus, what was threatened was not merely the conquest of one race by another cognate to it, like that of the Medes by the Persians, or of the Greeks by Rome, but the obliteration of such art, civilisation, and refinement as Western Asia had attained to in course of ages by the successive efforts of Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Greeks—the spread over some of the fairest regions of the earth of a low type of savagery —a type which in religion went no further than the worship of the sun;[2] in art knew but the easier forms of metallurgy and the construction of carts; in manners and customs, included cannibalism, the use of poisoned weapons, and a relation between the sexes destructive alike of all delicacy and of all family affection. The Parthians were, no doubt, rude and coarse in their character as compared with the Persians; but they had been civilised to a certain extent by three centuries of subjection to the Persians and the Greco-Macedonians before they rose to power; they affected Persian manners; they patronized Greek art, they appreciated the advantages of having in their midst a number of Greek states. Had the Massagetæ and their kindred tribes of Sakas, Tochari, Dahæ, Yue-chi, and Su, which now menaced the Parthian power, succeeded in sweeping it away, the general declension of all which is lovely or excellent in human life would have been marked. Scythicism would have overspread Western Asia. No doubt the conquerors would have learned something from those whom they subjected; but it cannot be supposed that they would have learned much.

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[1] See Plin. *H. N.* xi. 53.

[2] Herod. i. 216. Θεῶν μοῦνον ἠέλιον σέβονται. Strabo repeats the statement (l. s. c.)

The change would have been like that which passed over the Empire of the West, when Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Alans, Heruli, depopulated its fairest provinces and laid its civilisation in the dust. The East would have been barbarised; the gains of centuries would have been lost; the work of Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, and other great benefactors of Asiatic humanity have been undone; Western Asia would have sunk back into a condition not very much above that from which it was raised two thousand years earlier by the primitive Chaldæans and the Assyrians.

Artabanus II., the Parthian monarch who succeeded Phraates II., appears to have appreciated aright the perils of his position. He was not content, when the particular body of barbarians which had defeated and slain his predecessor, having ravaged Parthia Proper, returned home, to fold his arms and wait until he was again attacked. According to the brief, but expressive words of Justin,[1] he assumed the aggressive, and invaded the country of the Tochari, one of the most powerful of the Scythic tribes, which was now settled in a portion of the region that had, till lately, belonged to the Bactrian kingdom.[2] Artabanus evidently felt that what was needed was to roll back the flood of invasion, which had advanced so near to the sacred home of his nation; that the barbarians required to be taught a lesson; that they must at least be made to understand that Parthia was to be respected; or that, if this could not be done, the fate of the Empire was sealed. He therefore, with a gallantry and boldness that we cannot sufficiently admire—a boldness that seemed like

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[1] 'Bello Tocharis illato' (*Hist. Phil.* xlii. 2, § 2).

[2] See above, p. 115.

rashness, but was in reality prudence, without calculating too closely the immediate chances of battle, led his troops against one of the most forward of the advancing tribes. But fortune, unhappily, was adverse. How the battle was progressing we are not told; but it appears that in the thick of an engagement, Artabanus received a wound in the fore-arm, from the effects of which he died almost immediately.[1] The death of the leader decides in the East, almost to a certainty, the issue of a contest. We cannot doubt that the Parthians, having lost their monarch, were repulsed; that the expedition failed; and that the situation of affairs became once more at least as threatening as it had been before Artabanus made his attempt. Two Parthian monarchs had now fallen within the space of a few years in combat with the aggressive Scyths—two Parthian armies had suffered defeat. Was this to be always so? If it was, then Parthia had only to make up her mind to fall, and, like the great Roman, to let it be her care that she should fall grandly and with dignity.

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[1] 'In brachio vulneratus, *statim* decedit.' (Justin, l. s. c.) The *immediate* death consequent upon a wound in the *forearm* raises a painful suspicion that the weapon which dealt the wound had been poisoned. (See above, p. 120, note 1.)

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CHAPTER IX.

Accession of Mithridates II. Termination of the Scythic Wars. Commencement of the struggle with Armenia. Previous history of Armenia. Result of the first Armenian War. First contact of Rome with Parthia. Attitude of Rome towards the East at this time. Second Armenian War. Death of Mithridates.

'Mithridati res gestæ Magni cognomen dedere.'—Justin, xlii. 2, § 3.

On the death of Artabanus II., about B.C. 124, his son, Mithridates II., was proclaimed king. Of this monarch, whose achievements (according to Justin[1]) procured him the epithet of 'the Great,' the accounts which have come down to us are extremely scanty and unsatisfactory. Justin, who is our principal informant on the subject of the early Parthian history, has unfortunately confounded him with the third monarch of the name,[2] who ascended the throne more than sixty years later, and has left us only the slightest and most meagre outline of his actions. The other classical writers, only to a very small extent, supplement Justin's narrative; and the result is that of a reign which was one of the most important in the early Parthian series, the historical inquirer at the present day can form but a most incomplete conception.

It appears, however, from the account of Justin, and from such other notices as have reached us of the con-

[1] See the passage quoted at the head of the chapter. Compare Trog. Pomp. Prol. lib. xlii.

[2] Justin, xlii. 4, § 1. That Trogus did not make the mistake appears from the Prologue to book xlii., where we are told that he placed *several* kings between Mithridates II. and Orodes.

dition of things at this time in the regions lying east of the Caspian, that Mithridates was entirely successful where his father and his cousin had signally failed. He gained a number of victories over the Scythic hordes;[1] and effectually checked their direct progress towards the south, throwing them thereby upon the east and the south-east. Danger to Parthia from the Scyths seems after his reign to have passed away. They found a vent for their superabundant population in Seistan, Affghanistan, and India, and ceased to have any hopes of making an impression on the Arsacid kingdom. Mithridates, it is probable, even took territory from them. The acquisition of parts of Bactria by the Parthians *from the Scyths*, which is attested by Strabo,[2] belongs, in all likelihood, to his reign; and the extension of the Parthian dominion to Seistan[3] may well date from the same period. Justin tells us that he added many nations to the Parthian Empire.[4] The statements made of the extent of Parthia on the side of Syria in the time of Mithridates the First render it impossible for us to discover these nations in the west: we are, therefore, compelled to regard them as consisting of races on the eastern frontier, who could at this period only be outlying tribes of the recent Scythic immigration.

The victories of Mithridates in the East encouraged him to turn his arms in the opposite direction, and to make an attack on the important country of Armenia, which bordered his north-western frontier. Armenia was at the time under the government of a certain

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[1] 'Cum Scythis prospere aliquoties dimicavit, ultorque injuriæ parentum fuit.' (Justin, xlii. 2, § 5.)

[2] Strab. xi. 9, § 2. Ἀφείλοντο τῆς Βακτριανῆς μέρος [οἱ Παρθυαῖοι] βιασάμενοι τοὺς Σκύθας.

[3] Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 18.

[4] 'Multos populos Parthico regno addidit.' (xlii. 2, § 4.)

Ortoadistus,[1] who seems to have been the predecessor, and was perhaps the father, of the great Tigranes.[2] Ortoadistus ruled the tract called by the Romans 'Armenia Magna,' which extended from the Euphrates on the west to the mouth of the Araxes on the east, and from the valley of the Kur northwards to Mount Niphates and the head streams of the Tigris towards the south. The people over which he ruled was one of the oldest in Asia, and had on many occasions shown itself impatient of a conqueror. Justin, on reaching this point in his work, observes that he could not feel himself justified if, when his subject brought before him so mighty a kingdom, he did not enter at some length on its previous history.[3] The modern historian would be even less excusable than Justin if he omitted such a review, since, while he has less right to assume a knowledge of early Armenian history on the part of his readers, he has greater means of gratifying their curiosity, owing to the recent discovery of sources of information unknown to the ancients.

Armenia first comes before us in Genesis, where it is mentioned as the country on whose mountains the ark rested.[4] A recollection of it was thenceforth retained in the semi-mythic traditions of the Babylonians.[5] According to some,[6] the Egyptian monarchs of the

[1] Justin, xlii. 2, § 6. Some of the MSS. have 'Arthoadisti,' others 'Artadisti.' It may be suspected that the true reading is 'Artavasdis.'

[2] Appian makes Tigranes the son of a Tigranes (*Syr.* p. 118, D); but his authority is not very great. Moses of Chorene calls his father Ardashes.

[3] Justin, xlii. 2, §§ 7, 8.

[4] Gen. viii. 4. The geographical term used is Ararat, אררט, which is etymologically quite distinct from Armenia, but which designates the same country.

[5] See Beros. Fr. 7, § 6.

[6] Lenormant, *Manuel d'Histoire Antique de l'Orient*, vol. i. pp. 379, 385, &c. The conclusion is based on the etymological identity of a word read as *Lemanen* or *Remanen* with *Armina* (Old Pers.) or Armenia. The etymology is, of course, quite possible; but it is against the identification that the word *Armina*

eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties carried their arms into its remote valleys, and exacted tribute from the petty chiefs who then ruled there. At any rate, it is certain that from about the ninth century B.C. it was well known to the Assyrians, who were engaged from that time till about B.C. 640 in almost constant wars with its inhabitants.[1] At this period three principal races inhabited the country—the Naïri, who were spread from the mountains west of Lake Van along both sides of the Tigris to Bir on the Euphrates, and even further; the Urarda (Alarodii, or people of Ararat), who dwelt north and east of the Naïri, on the upper Euphrates, about the lake of Van, and probably on the Araxes; and the Minni, whose country lay south-east of the Urarda, in the Urumiyeh basin and the adjoining parts of Zagros. Of these three races, the Urarda were the most powerful, and it was with them that the Assyrians waged their most bloody wars. The capital city of the Urarda was Van, on the eastern shores of the lake; and here it was that their kings set up the most remarkable of their inscriptions. Six monarchs, who apparently all belong to one dynasty, left inscriptions in this locality commemorative of their military expeditions or of their offerings to the gods.[2] The later names of the series can be identified with those of kings who contended with Assyrian monarchs belonging to the last, or Sargonid, dynasty;[3] and hence we are entitled approximately to fix the series to the

seems not to have been known in the country till the times of the Medo-Persians.

[1] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. pp. 101, 112, 150, 210, &c. (2nd edit.)

[2] For an account of these inscriptions, see Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 394–403. They have been published by Schulz.

[3] Arghistis contended with Sargon, ab. B.C. 720–700, and the second Bilat-Duri (Milidduris of Layard) with Asshur-bani-pal, ab. B.C. 640.

seventh and eighth centuries before our era. The Urarda must at this time have exercised a dominion over almost the whole of the region to which the name of Armenia commonly attaches.[1] They were worthy antagonists of the Assyrians, and, though occasionally worsted in fight, maintained their independence, at any rate, till the time of Asshur-bani-pal (about B.C. 640), when the last king of the Van series, whose name is read as Bilat-duri, succumbed to the Assyrian power, and consented to pay a tribute for his dominions.[2]

There is reason to believe, that between the time when we obtain this view of the primitive Armenian peoples and that at which we next have any exact knowledge of the condition of the country—the time of the Persian monarchy—a great revolution had taken place in the region. The Naïri, Urarda, and Minni were Turanian, or, at any rate, non-Arian, races.[3] Their congeners in Western Asia were the early Babylonians and the Susianians, not the Medes, the Persians, or the Phrygians. But by the time of Herodotus the Arian character of the Armenians had become established. Their close connection with the Phrygians was recognised.[4] They had changed their national appellation; for while in the Assyrian period the terms Naïri and Urarda had preponderated, under the Persians they had come to be called Armenians and their country Armenia.[5] The personal names of individuals

[1] They style themselves 'kings of the Naïri,' and relate their successful expeditions into the Minni country. Their inscriptions at Malatiyeh, Palu, and in the Miyandab, south of Lake Urumiyeh, indicate the extent of their sway.

[2] *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. p. 210, 2nd edit.

[3] Sir H. Rawlinson in the author's *Herodotus*, vol. iv. p. 206, 2nd edit.

[4] Herod. vii. 73.

[5] See the *Beh. Ins.* col. i. par. 6; col. ii. par. 7, &c. The term Ἀρμένιοι seems to have been first introduced into Greece by Hecatæus (Fr. 195).

in the country, both men and women, had acquired a decidedly Arian cast.[1] Everything seems to indicate that a strange people had immigrated into the land, bringing with them a new language, new manners and customs, and a new religious system.[2] From what quarter they had come, whether from Phrygia, as Herodotus and Stephen[3] believed, or, as we should gather from their language and religion, from Media, is perhaps doubtful; but it seems certain that from one quarter or another Armenia had been Arianised; the old Turanian character had passed away from it; immigrants had flocked in, and a new people had been formed—the real Armenians of later times, and indeed of the present day—by the admixture of ruling Arian tribes with a primitive Turanian population, the descendants of the old inhabitants.

The new race, thus formed, though perhaps not less brave and warlike than the old, was less bent on maintaining its independence. Moses of Chorêné, the Armenian historian, admits that from the time of the Median preponderance in Western Asia, the Armenians held under them a subject position.[4] That such was

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[1] In the Behistun Inscription we have three Armenian names, Dadarshish, Arakha, and Handita. Of these Dadarshish is manifestly Arian, being a reduplicated form from *darsh*, 'to dare.' Arakha has the root *Ar* (= *ariya*, 'noble') with the Scythic termination *akh* suffixed to it. Handita has the same participial ending as Khshathrita (Xathritis), Arshita (Arsites), and the like, but its etymology is otherwise obscure. To these undoubted Armenian names we may add from Moses of Chorêné Tigranes, Tigrania, Eryandus (=Aryandes), and Zaria; and from Xenophon, Sabaris (=Sybares). Of these, Tigranes, Aryandes, and Sybares are well-known Persian names; Tigrania is a feminine form of Tigranes (compare Roxané): Zaria is from *zara*, 'gold,' and would mean 'golden-haired.' Compare the Greek Chrysó and Chrysis.

[2] The later Armenian religion was like the Persian (Strab. xi. 14, § 16). The religion of the Urarda was entirely different.

[3] Steph. Byz. ad voc. Ἀρμενία.

[4] *Hist. Armen.* i. 21.

their position under the Persians is abundantly evident;[1] and, so far as appears, there was only one occasion during the entire Achæmenian period (B.C. 559 to B.C. 331) when they exhibited any impatience of the Persian yoke, or made any attempt to free themselves from it. In the early portion of the reign of Darius Hystaspis they took part in a revolt raised by a Mede called Phraortes, and were not reduced to obedience without some difficulty.[2] But from henceforth their fidelity to the Achæmenian Kings was unbroken; they paid their tribute (apparently) without reluctance,[3] and furnished contingents of troops to the Persian armies when called upon.[4] After Arbela, they submitted without a struggle to Alexander;[5] and when in the division of his dominions, which followed upon the battle of Ipsus, they fell naturally to Seleucus, they acquiesced in the arrangement.[6] It was not until Antiochus the Great suffered his great defeat at the hands of the Romans (B.C. 190) that Armenia bestirred itself, and, after probably four and a half centuries of subjection, became once more an independent power. Even then the movement seems to have originated rather in the ambition of a chief than in a desire for liberty on the part of the people. Artaxias had been governor of the Greater Armenia under Antiochus,[7] and seized the opportunity afforded by the battle of Magnesia to change his title of satrap into that of sovereign. No war followed. Antiochus was too

[1] *Behist. Ins.* col. i. par. 6; Herod. iii. 93; Xen. *An.* iv. 3, § 4; 4, § 4; Arrian, *Exp. Alex.* iii. 8.

[2] *Beh. Inscr.* col. ii. par. 2-13.

[3] Strab. xi. 14, § 9. Ὁ σατράπης τῆς Ἀρμενίας τῷ Πέρσῃ κατ' ἔτος δισμυρίους πώλους τοῖς Μιθρακίνοις ἔπεμπεν.

[4] Herod. vii. 73; Arrian, l. s. c.

[5] Arrian, iii. 16.

[6] Strab. xi. 14, § 15.

[7] Ibid. Ἦρχον οὗτοι [Ἀρταξίας τε καὶ Ζαριάδρις] τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπιτρέψαντος.

much weakened by his reverses to make any attempt to reduce Artaxias or recover Armenia; and the nation obtained autonomy without having to undergo the usual ordeal of a bloody struggle. When at the expiration of five-and-twenty years Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus the Great, determined on an effort to reconquer the lost province, no very stubborn resistance was offered to him. Artaxias was defeated and made prisoner in the very first year of the war (B.C. 165), and Armenia seems to have passed again under the sway of the Seleucidæ.[1]

It would seem that matters remained in this state for the space of about fifteen or sixteen years. When, however, Mithridates I. (Arsaces VI.), about B.C. 150, had overrun the eastern provinces of Syria, and made himself master in succession of Media, Elymaïs, and Babylonia, the revolutionary movement excited by his successes reached Armenia, and the standard of independence was once more raised in that country. According to the Armenian historians,[2] an Arsacid prince, Wagharshag or Valarsaces, was established as sovereign by the influence of the Parthian monarch, but was allowed to rule independently. A reign of twenty-two years is assigned to this prince, whose kingdom is declared to have reached from the Caucasus to Nisibis, and from the Caspian to the Mediterranean.[3] He was succeeded by his son, Arshag (Arsaces), who reigned thirteen years, and was, like his father, active and warlike, contending chiefly with the people of Pontus.[4] At his death the crown descended to his son, Ardashes,[5] who is probably the Ortoadistus of Justin.[6]

Such were the antecedents of Armenia when Mithri-

1 Appian, *Syriaca*, p. 117, B.
2 See Mos. Chor. *Hist. Arm.* ii. 3.
3 Ibid. chs. 4–7.
4 Ibid. ch. 8.
5 Ibid. ch. 9, § 1.
6 Ardashes is made by Moses the father and predecessor of Tigranes,

dates II., having given an effectual check to the progress of the Scythians in the east, determined to direct his arms towards the west, and to attack the dominions of his relative, the third of the Armenian Arsacidæ. Of the circumstances of this war, and its results, we have scarcely any knowledge. Justin, who alone distinctly mentions it, gives us no details. A notice, however, in Strabo, which must refer to *about* this time, is thought to indicate with sufficient clearness the result of the struggle, which seems to have been unfavourable to the Armenians. Strabo says that Tigranes, before his accession to the throne, was for a time a hostage among the Parthians.[1] As hostages are only given by the vanquished party, we may assume that Ortoadistus (Ardashes) found himself unable to offer an effectual resistance to the Parthian king, and consented after a while to a disadvantageous peace, for his observance of which hostages were required by the victor.

It cannot have been more than a few years after the termination of this war, which must have taken place towards the close of the second, or soon after the beginning of the first century,[2] that Parthia was for the first time brought into contact with Rome.

The Great Republic, which after her complete victory over Antiochus III., B.C. 190, had declined to take

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and is given a reign of twenty-five years. (Compare ii. 10, § 1 with ii. 13, § 1.) This would bring his accession to B.C. 121, and would make the expedition of Mithridates II. (ab. B.C. 100) certainly fall in his time.

[1] Strab. xi. 14, § 15. Κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν ὡμήρευσε παρὰ Πάρθοις. Compare Justin, xxxviii. 3, § 1.

[2] As Tigranes lived to B.C. 55, and was eighty-five at his death (Lucian, *Macr.* § 15), he must have been born B.C. 140; in which case he can scarcely have been given as a hostage till B.C. 120. His accession to the throne is generally placed B.C. 96.

possession of a single foot of ground in Asia, regarding the general state of affairs as not then ripe for an advance of Terminus in that quarter, had now for some time seen reason to alter its policy, and to aim at adding to its European an extensive Asiatic dominion. Macedonia and Greece having been absorbed, and Carthage destroyed (B.C. 148–146), the conditions of the political problem seemed to be so far changed as to render a further advance towards the east a safe measure; and accordingly, when it was seen that the line of the kings of Pergamus was coming to an end, the Senate set on foot intrigues which had for their object the devolution upon Rome of the sovereignty belonging to those monarchs. By clever management the third Attalus was induced, in repayment of his father's obligations to the Romans,[1] to bequeath his entire dominions as a legacy to the Republic. In vain did his illegitimate half-brother, Aristonicus, dispute the validity of so extraordinary a testament; the Romans, aided by Mithridates IV., then monarch of Pontus, easily triumphed over such resistance as this unfortunate prince could offer,[2] and having ceded to their ally the portion of Phrygia which had belonged to the Pergamene kingdom,[3] entered on the possession of the remainder. Having thus become an Asiatic power, the Great Republic was of necessity mixed up henceforth with the various movements and struggles which agitated Western Asia, and was naturally led to strengthen its position among the Asiatic kingdoms

[1] The chief use which Rome made of her victory at Magnesia was to augment the territory of her ally, Eumenes of Pergamus, whose dominions she more than doubled on the occasion. (See Niebuhr, *Lectures on Ancient History*, vol. iii. p. 403, E. T.)

[2] Justin, xxxvi. 4, §§ 6–9; Vell. Paterc. ii. 4, &c.

[3] Justin, xxxvii. 1, § 2.

by such alliances as seemed at each conjuncture best fitted for its interests.

Hitherto no occasion had arisen for any direct dealings between Rome and Parthia. Their respective territories were still separated by considerable tracts, which were in the occupation of the Syrians, the Cappadocians, and the Armenians. Their interests had neither clashed, nor as yet sufficiently united them to give rise to any diplomatic intercourse. But the progress of the two Empires in opposite directions was continually bringing them nearer to each other; and events had now reached a point at which the Empires began to have (or to seem to have) such a community of interests as led naturally to an exchange of communications. A great power had been recently developed in these parts. In the rapid way so common in the East, Mithridates V., of Pontus, the son and successor of Rome's ally, had, between B.C. 112 and B.C. 93, built up an Empire of vast extent, numerous population, and almost inexhaustible resources. He had established his authority over Armenia Minor, Colchis, the entire east coast of the Black Sea, the Chersonesus Taurica, or kingdom of the Bosporus, and even over the whole tract lying west of the Chersonese as far as the mouth of the Tyras, or Dniester.[1] Nor had these gains contented him. He had obtained half of Paphlagonia by an iniquitous compact with Nicomedes, King of Bithynia; he had occupied Galatia; and he was engaged in attempts to bring Cappadocia under his influence. In this last-named project he was assisted by the Armenians, with whose king, Tigranes, he had (about B.C. 96) formed a close alliance, at the same time giving him his

[1] Memnon, Fr. 30; Justin, xxxvii. 3; Strab. vii. 4, § 3, &c.

daughter, Cleopatra, in marriage.[1] Rome, though she had not yet determined on war with Mithridates, was resolved to thwart his Cappadocian projects, and in B.C. 92 sent Sulla into Asia with orders to put down the puppet whom Mithridates and Tigranes were establishing, and to replace upon the Cappadocian throne a certain Ariobarzanes, whom they had driven from his kingdom.[2] In the execution of this commission, Sulla was brought into hostile collision with the Armenians, whom he defeated with great slaughter, and drove from Cappadocia together with their puppet king.[3] Thus, not only did the growing power of Mithridates of Pontus, by inspiring Rome and Parthia with a common fear, tend to draw them together, but the course of events had actually given them a common enemy in Tigranes of Armenia, who was equally obnoxious to both.

For Tigranes, who, during the time that he was a hostage in Parthia, had contracted engagements towards the Parthian monarch which involved a cession of territory, and who in consequence of his promises had been aided by the Parthians in seating himself on his father's throne,[4] though he made the cession required of him in the first instance, had soon afterwards repented of his good faith, had gone to war with his benefactors, recovered the ceded territory, and laid waste a considerable tract of country lying within the admitted limits of the Parthian kingdom.[5]

[1] Appian, *Mithridat.* p. 180, C Plut. *Lucull.* § 14; Justin, xxxviii. 3, § 2; Memnon, Fr. 43, § 2.

[2] Plut. *Sull.* § 5; Liv. *Epit.* lxx.

[3] Plut. l.s.c. Πλείονας Ἀρμενίων προβοηθοῦντας ἀποκτείνας, Γόρδιον μὲν ἐξήλασεν, Ἀριοβαρζάνην δ' ἀπέδειξε βασιλέα.

[4] Strab. xi. 14, § 15; Justin, xxxviii. 3, § 1.

[5] Strab. l. s.c. The district ravaged was that about Nineveh and Arbela (ἐπόρθησε τήν τε περὶ Νίνον καὶ τὴν περὶ Ἀρβηλα). There is a difficulty in fixing the time of these events, and I have been guided by probability in placing them at this exact period.

These proceedings had, of course, alienated Mithridates II.; and we may with much probability ascribe to them the step, which he now took, of sending an ambassador to Sulla. Orobazus, the individual selected, was charged to propose an alliance offensive and defensive between the two countries.[1] Sulla received the overture favourably, but probably considered that it transcended his powers to conclude a treaty; and thus nothing more was effected by the embassy than the establishment of a good understanding between the two States.[2]

Soon after this Tigranes appears to have renewed his attacks upon Parthia,[3] which in the interval between B.C. 92 and B.C. 83 he greatly humbled,[4] depriving it of the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, at this time called Gordyêné, and under the rule of one of the Parthian tributary kings.[5] Of the details of this war we have no account; and it is even uncertain whether it fell within the reign of Mithridates II. or no. The unfortunate mistake of Justin,[6] whereby he confounded this monarch with Mithridates III., has thrown this portion of the Parthian history into confusion, and has made even the successor of Mithridates II. uncertain.

Mithridates II. probably died about B.C. 89, after

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[1] Plutarch speaks of the Parthians as *συμμαχίας καὶ φιλίας δεομένους*. Livy's epitomizer says: 'Parthorum legati, a rege Arsace missi, venerunt ad Sullam, ut amicitiam populi Romani peterent.' Velleius puts the embassy nine years later (i. 24, § 3), when Sulla was in Asia for the second time; but the combined authority of Livy and Plutarch outweighs his.

[2] We find no mention in any author of a treaty being made at this time. That friendly relations were regarded as established is implied in the expression of Livy's epitomizer, under B.C. 66, 'Cn. Pompeius cum rege Parthorum Phraate amicitiam *renovavit*.' (Ep. c.)

[3] See Plut. *Lucull.* § 14. *Τιγράνης, ἔχων δύναμιν ἣ Πάρθους περικόπτει τῆς Ἀσίας.*

[4] Ibid. § 21. *Τὴν Πάρθων, ὡς ἄλλος οὐδείς, δύναμιν ἐταπείνωσεν.*

[5] Cf. Strab. xi. 14, § 15 with Plut. *Lucull.* § 21.

[6] See above, p. 123.

a reign which must have exceeded thirty-five years. His great successes against the Scythians in the earlier portion of his reign were to some extent counterbalanced by his losses to Tigranes in his old age; but on the whole he must be regarded as one of the more vigorous and successful of the Parthian monarchs, and as combining courage with prudence. It is to his credit that he saw the advantage of establishing friendly relations with Rome at a time when an ordinary Oriental monarch might have despised the distant Republic, and have thought it beneath his dignity to make overtures to so strange and anomalous a power. Whether he definitely foresaw the part which Rome was about to play in the East, we may doubt; but at any rate he must have had a prevision that the part would not be trifling or insignificant. Of the private character of Mithridates we have no sufficient materials to judge. If it be true that he put his envoy, Orobazus, to death on account of his having allowed Sulla to assume a position at their conference derogatory to the dignity of the Parthian State,[1] we must pronounce him a harsh master; but the tale, which rests wholly on the weak authority of the gossip-loving Plutarch, is perhaps scarcely to be accepted.

[1] As related by Plutarch, *Sull.* § 5.

CHAPTER X.

Dark period of Parthian History. Doubtful Succession of the Monarchs. Accession of Sanatrœces, ab. B.C. 76. *Position of Parthia during the Mithridatic Wars. Accession of Phraates III. His Relations with Pompey. His Death. Civil War between his two sons, Mithridates and Orodes. Death of Mithridates.*

'Varia complurium regum in Parthis successione imperium accepit Orodes.'
Trog. Pomp. Epit. lib. xlii.

THE successor of Mithridates II. is unknown. It has been argued, indeed, that the reigns of the known monarchs of this period would not be unduly long if we regarded them as strictly consecutive, and placed no blank between the death of Mithridates II., and the accession of the next Arsaces whose name has come down to us.[1] Sanatrœces, it has been said, may have been, and may, therefore, well be regarded as, the successor of Mithridates. But the words of the epitomiser of Trogus, placed at the head of this chapter, forbid the acceptance of this theory. The epitomiser would not have spoken of '*many* kings' as intervening between Mithridates II. and Orodes, if the number had been only three. The expression implies, *at least*, four or five monarchs; and thus we have no choice but to suppose that the succession of the kings is here imperfect,[2] and that at least one or

[1] Clinton, *Fasti Romani*, vol. ii. p. 245, note 1.

[2] The known kings between Mithridates II. and Orodes are three only—viz. Sanatrœces, Phraates III., and Mithridates III. The succession of these three and of Orodes to Mithridates III. is certain. Thus the only possible gap is between Mithridates II. and Sanatrœces.

two reigns were interposed between those of the second Mithridates and of the monarch known as Sanatrœces, Sinatroces, or Sintricus.

A casual notice of a Parthian monarch in a late writer may supply the gap, either wholly or in part. Lucian speaks of a certain Mnasciras as a Parthian king, who died at the advanced age of ninety-six.[1] As there is no other place in the Parthian history at which the succession is doubtful, and as no such name as Mnasciras occurs elsewhere in the list, it seems necessary, unless we reject Lucian's authority altogether, to insert this monarch here. We cannot say, however, how long he reigned, or ascribe to him any particular actions; nor can we say definitely what king he either succeeded or preceded. It is possible that his reign covered the entire interval between Mithridates II. and Sanatrœces; it is possible, on the other hand, that he had successors and predecessors, whose names have altogether perished.

The expression used by the epitomiser of Trogus,[2] and a few words dropped by Plutarch,[3] render it probable that about this time there were contentions between various members of the Arsacid family which issued in actual civil war. Such contentions are a marked feature of the later history; and, according to Plutarch, they commenced at this period. We may suspect from the great age of two of the monarchs chosen,[4] that the Arsacid stock was now very limited in number, that it offered no candidates for the throne

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[1] Lucian, *Macrob.* § 15.

[2] '*Varia* complurium regum *successione.*' A *varied* succession implies irregularity, which is naturally accompanied by disturbance.

[3] Plut. *Lucull.* § 36. Τῆς Πάρθων δυνάμεως ὑπ' ἐμφυλίων καὶ προσοίκων πολέμων οὐδ' Ἀρμενίους ὑβρίζοντας ἐῤῥωμένης ἀμύνεσθαι.

[4] Sanatrœces and Mnasciras, who were respectively eighty and about ninety at their accession.

whose claims were indisputable, and that consequently at each vacancy there was a division of opinion among the 'Megistanes,' which led to the claimants making appeal, if the election went against them, to the arbitrament of arms.

The dark time of Parthian history is terminated by the accession—probably in B.C. 76 [1]—of the king above mentioned as known by the three names of Sanatrœces, Sinatroces, and Sintricus.[2] The form, Sanatrœces, which appears upon the Parthian coins, is on that account to be preferred. The king so called had reached when elected the advanced age of eighty.[3] It may be suspected that he was a son of the sixth Arsaces [4] (Mithridates I.), and consequently a brother of Phraates II. He had, perhaps, been made prisoner by the Scythians in the course of the disastrous war waged by that monarch, and had been retained in captivity for above fifty years. At any rate, he appears to have been indebted to the Scythians in some measure for the crown which he acquired so tardily, his enjoyment of it having been secured by the help of a contingent of troops furnished to him by the Scythic tribe of the Sacauracæ.[5]

[1] So Phlegon (*Fr.* 12), who is more definite in his statement than Mr. Clinton represents (*F. R.* vol. ii. p. 245). Dio (*Hist. Rom.* xxxv. 3; xxxvi. 28) and Appian (*Mithridat.* p. 242, E.) are less exact, but on the whole confirm Phlegon.

[2] Sanatrœces (ΣΑΝΑΤΡΟΙΚΗΣ) is the form found upon the coins; Sinatroces is that of the best MSS. of Lucian; Sintricus occurs in Appian (l.s.c.) Phlegon gives Sinatruces (Σινατροάκης).

[3] Or, strictly speaking, seventy-nine (ὀγδοηκοστὸν ἔτος γεγονώς. Lucian, l.s.c.)

[4] The suspicion arises from the fact that, like Phraates II., he takes the epithet of θεοπάτωρ upon his coins, which implies the divinity of his father. It is doubtful if any Parthian monarch besides Mithridates I. had yet been deified. The age of Sanatrœces is suitable. As he was seventy-nine in B.C. 76, he must have been born B.C. 155, or about twenty years before Mithridates I. died.

[5] Lucian, l.s.c. The 'Sacauracæ' are not otherwise known, unless we regard them as identical with the Sacarauli (supra, p. 118).

The position of the Empire at the time of his accession was one of considerable difficulty. Parthia, during the period of her civil contentions, had lost much ground in the west, having been deprived by Tigranes of at least two important provinces.[1] At the same time she had been witness of the tremendous struggle between Rome and Pontus, which, commenced in B.C. 88, was still continuing, and still far from decided, when Sanatrœces came to the throne. An octogenarian monarch was unfit to engage in strife; and if Sanatrœces, notwithstanding this drawback, had been ambitious of military distinction, it would have been difficult for him to determine into which scale the interests of his country required that he should cast the weight of his sword. On the one hand, Parthia had evidently much to fear from the military force and the covetous disposition of Tigranes, king of Armenia, the son-in-law of Mithridates, and at this time his chosen ally. Tigranes had hitherto been continually increasing in strength. By the defeat of Artanes,[2] king of Sophêné, or Armenia Minor, he had made himself master of Armenia in its widest extent; by his wars with Parthia herself, he had acquired Gordyêné, or Northern Mesopotamia, and Adiabêné, or the entire rich tract east of the middle Tigris (including Assyria Proper and Arbelitis), as far, at any rate, as the course of the lower Zab;[3] by means which are not stated he had brought under subjection the king of the important country of Media Atropatêné, independent

[1] Gordyêné and Adiabêné. (See Plut. *Lucull.* § 21 and § 26.) It is uncertain whether Media Atropatêné, which had also been conquered by Tigranes (Strab. xi. 14, § 15; Plut. *Lucull.* § 26), had up to this time ever formed a portion of the Parthian dominions. *Most probably it had not.*

[2] *Strab. xi. 14, § 15.*

[3] Plutarch. *Lucull.* § 26; Strab. l.s.c.

since the time of Alexander.[1] Invited into Syria, about B.C. 83, by the wretched inhabitants, wearied with the perpetual civil wars between princes of the house of the Seleucidæ, he had found no difficulty in establishing himself as king over Cilicia, Syria, and most of Phœnicia.[2] About B.C. 80 he had determined on building himself a new capital in the province of Gordyêné,[3] a capital of a vast size,[4] provided with all the luxuries required by an Oriental court,[5] and fortified with walls which recalled the glories of the ancient cities of the Assyrians.[6] The position of this huge town on the very borders of the Parthian kingdom, in a province which had till very recently been Parthian, could be no otherwise understood than as a standing menace to Parthia itself, the proclamation of an intention to extend the Armenian dominion southwards, and to absorb at any rate all the rich and fertile country between Gordyêné and the sea. Thus threatened by Armenia,[7] it was impossible for Sanatrœces cordially to embrace the side of Mithridates,[8]

[1] Ὑπηκόους ἔσχε καὶ τὸν Ἀτροπάτηνὸν καὶ τὸν Γορδυαῖον. Strab. l.s.c. Compare Plut. *Lucull.* §§ 26 and 27.

[2] Appian, *Syr.* p. 133; Plut. *Lucull.* § 14; Justin, xl. 1; Eutrop. vi. 8.

[3] The exact position of Tigranocerta is unknown, but it was probably not far from the modern Mardin. (See Strab. xvi. 1, § 23; Tac. *Ann.* xv. 5.)

[4] According to Strabo, twelve Greek cities were depopulated to furnish Tigranocerta with inhabitants (xi. 14, § 15). According to Appian, 300,000 Cappadocians were transplanted thither (*Mithrid.* p. 216, C). Plutarch speaks of the population as having been drawn from Cilicia, Cappadocia, Gordyêné, Assyria, and Adiabêné (*Lucull.* § 26).

[5] See Appian, *Mithrid.* p. 229, A. Καὶ βασιλεια καὶ παραδείσους κατὰ τὸ προάστειον ἐποίει μακρούς, καὶ κυνηγέσια πολλὰ καὶ λίμνας.

[6] Appian says the walls were seventy-five feet high (*ib.* p. 228, E). The height of those seen by Xenophon in Assyria, was 100 or 150 feet. (*Anab.* iii. 4, §§ 7–11.)

[7] A threat was also implied in the assumption by Tigranes of the title 'King of kings' (Plut. *Lucull.* §§ 14 and 21), hitherto only borne by the Parthian monarchs.

[8] One of the predecessors of Sanatrœces had, it would seem, allied himself with Mithridates about B.C. 88. (Appian, *Mithr.* p. 180 C.; Memnon, Fr. 30, § 3); but Parthia does not appear to have ever lent him any aid.

with which Armenia and its king were so closely allied; it was impossible for him even to wish that the two allies should be free to work their will on the Asiatic continent unchecked by the power which alone had for the last twelve years obstructed their ambitious projects.

On the other hand, there was already among the Asiatic princes generally a deep distrust of Rome [1]—a fear that in the new people, which had crept so quietly into Asia, was to be found a power more permanently formidable than the Macedonians, a power which would make up for want of brilliancy and dash by a dogged perseverance in its aims, and a stealthy, crafty policy, sure in the end to achieve great and striking results. The acceptance of the kingdom of Attalus had not, perhaps, alarmed any one; but the seizure of Phrygia during the minority of Mithridates, without so much as a pretext,[2] and the practice, soon afterwards established, of setting up puppet kings,[3] bound to do the bidding of their Roman allies, had raised suspicions; the ease with which Mithridates, notwithstanding his great power and long preparation, had been vanquished in the first war (B.C. 88–84), had aroused fears; and Sanatrœces could not but misdoubt the advisability of lending aid to the Romans, and so helping them to obtain a still firmer hold on Western Asia. Accordingly we find, that when the final war broke out in B.C. 74, his inclination was, in the first instance, to stand wholly aloof, and when that became impossible, then to tempo-

[1] The existence of these feelings is indicated, 1, by the speech which Trogus put into the mouth of Mithridates (Justin, xxxviii. 4–7); and, 2, by the alleged letter of Mithridates to the Parthian king. (Sallust, *Hist. Rom.* ix. Fr. 12.)

[2] Justin, xxxviii. 5, § 3; Memnon, Fr. 30, § 2.

[3] As Ariobarzanes in Cappadocia, and the third Nicomedes in Bithynia.

rise. To the application for assistance made by Mithridates in B.C. 72, a direct negative was returned;[1] and it was not until, in B.C. 69, the war had approached his own frontier, and both parties made the most earnest appeals to him for aid, that he departed from the line of pure abstention, and had recourse to the expedient of amusing both sides with promises, while he helped neither.[2] According to Plutarch, this line of procedure offended Lucullus, and had nearly induced him to defer the final struggle with Mithridates and Tigranes, and turn his arms against Parthia.[3] But the prolonged resistance of Nisibis, and the successes of Mithridates in Pontus, diverted the danger; and the war rolling northwards, Parthia was not yet driven to take a side, but was enabled to maintain her neutral position for some years longer.

Meanwhile the aged Sanatrœces died,[4] and was succeeded by his son, Phraates III. This prince followed at first his father's example, and abstained from mixing himself up in the Mithridatic war; but in B.C. 66, being courted by both sides, and promised the restoration of the provinces lost to Tigranes,[5] he made alliance with Pompey, and undertook, while the latter pressed the war against Mithridates, to find occupation for the Armenian monarch in his own land. This

[1] Memnon, Fr. 43, § 2.

[2] Appian, *Mithr.* p. 230, D; Dio Cass. xxxv. 1 and 3; Memnon, Fr. 58, § 2. This last writer calls the Parthian monarch, by mistake, Phradates (*i.e.* Phraates). It is evident from Dio Cass. xxxv. 3, compared with xxxvi. 28, that it was Sanatrœces, and not his son, Phraates, who amused Lucullus and Mithridates with promises.

[3] Plut. *Lucull.* § 30.

[4] Appian, p. 242, E; Dio Cass. xxxvi. 28, B.

[5] Dio Cass. l.s.c. Ὁ Πομπήϊος τὴν φιλίαν τῷ Φραάτῃ ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς προσυνετίθετο. This can only mean that Pompey and Mithridates offered the same terms. What these were is best learnt from Memnon, Fr. 58, § 2 (διεπρεσβεύετο παραχωρεῖν αὐτῷ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν καὶ τὴν Ἀδιαβηνὴν καὶ τοὺς Μεγάλους Αὐλῶνας).

engagement he executed with fidelity. It had happened that the eldest living son of Tigranes, a prince bearing the same name as his father, having raised a rebellion in Armenia and been defeated, had taken refuge in Parthia with Phraates.[1] Phraates determined to take advantage of this circumstance. The young Tigranes was supported by a party among his countrymen who wished to see a youthful monarch upon the throne; and Phraates therefore considered that he would best discharge his obligations to the Romans by fomenting this family quarrel, and lending a moderate support to the younger Tigranes against his father. He marched an army into Armenia in the interest of the young prince, overran the open country, and advanced on Artaxata, the capital. Tigranes, the king, fled at his approach, and betook himself to the neighbouring mountains. Artaxata was invested; but as the siege promised to be long, the Parthian monarch after a time withdrew, leaving the pretender with as many troops as he thought necessary to press the siege to a successful issue. The result, however, disappointed his expectations. Scarcely was Phraates gone, when the old king fell upon his son, defeated him, and drove him beyond his borders.[2] He was forced, however, soon afterwards, to submit to Pompey,[3] who, while the civil war was raging in Armenia, had defeated Mithridates and driven him to take refuge in the Tauric Chersonese.

Phraates, now, naturally expected the due reward of his services, according to the stipulations of his agreement with Pompey. But that general was either dissatisfied with the mode in which the Parthian had

[1] Appian, p. 242, E; Dio Cass. xxxvi. 34, C.
[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.
[3] Dio Cass. xxxvi. 35; App. *Mithr.* p. 243, B.

discharged his obligations, or disinclined to strengthen the power which he saw to be the only one in these parts capable of disputing with Rome the headship of Asia. He could scarcely prevent, and he does not seem to have tried to prevent, the recovery of Adiabêné by the Parthians; but the nearer province of Gordyêné, to which they had an equal claim, he would by no means consent to their reoccupying. At first he destined it for the younger Tigranes.[1] When that prince offended him, he made it over to Ariobarzanes, the Cappadocian monarch.[2] That arrangement not taking effect, and the tract being disputed between Phraates and the elder Tigranes, he sent his legate, Afranius, to drive the Parthians out of the country, and delivered it over into the hands of the Armenians.[3] At the same time he insulted the Parthian monarch by refusing him his generally recognised title of 'King of Kings.'[4] He thus entirely alienated his late ally, who remonstrated against the injustice with which he was treated,[5] and was only deterred from declaring war by the wholesome fear which he entertained of the Roman arms.

Pompey, on his side, no doubt took the question into consideration, whether or no he should declare the Parthian prince a Roman enemy, and proceed to direct against him the available forces of the Empire. He had purposely made him hostile, and compelled him to take steps which might have furnished a plausible *casus belli*. But, on the whole, he found that he was not prepared

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[1] Appian, *Mithr.* p. 243, C.
[2] Ibid. p. 243, E.
[3] Plut. *Pomp.* § 36; Dio Cass. xxxvii. 5, C.
[4] Plut. *Pomp.* § 38; Dio Cass. xxxvii. 6.
[5] Dio Cass. l.s.c. πέμψας πρέσβεις πάντα ὅσα ἠδίκητο ἐπεκάλει οἱ—and again, πρέσβεις τε αὖθις πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπέστειλε καὶ πολλὰ μὲν τοῦ Τιγράνου κατηγόρησε, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἐς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὑπεσήμηνεν. This writer evidently feels the injustice with which Phraates was treated.

to venture on the encounter. The war had not been formally committed to him; and if he did not prosper in it, he dreaded the accusations of his enemies at Rome. He had seen, moreover, with his own eyes, that the Parthians were an enemy far from despicable, and his knowledge of campaigning told him that success against them was not certain. He feared to risk the loss of all the glory which he had obtained by grasping greedily at more, and preferred enjoying the fruits of the good luck which had hitherto attended him to tempting fortune on a new field.[1] He therefore determined that he would not allow himself to be provoked into hostilities by the reproaches, the dictatorial words, or even the daring acts of the Parthian King. When Phraates demanded his lost provinces, he replied, that the question of borders was one which lay, not between Parthia and Rome, but between Parthia and Armenia.[2] When he laid it down that the Euphrates properly bounded the Roman territory, and charged Pompey not to cross it, the latter said he would keep to the just bounds, whatever they were.[3] When Tigranes complained that after having been received into the Roman alliance he was still attacked by the Parthian armies, the reply of Pompey was that he was willing to appoint arbitrators who should decide all the disputes between the two nations.[4] The moderation and caution of these answers proved contagious. The monarchs addressed resolved to compose their differences, or at any rate to defer the settlement of them to a more convenient time. They

[1] See the account which Dio gives of Pompey's motives (xxxvii. 7).

[2] Φήσας ὑπὲρ ὁρίων τινῶν τὴν διαφορὰν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν Τιγράνη εἶναι. (Dio Cass. xxxvii. 7, D.)

[3] Both Dio (xxxvii. 6, A) and Plutarch (*Pomp.* § 33, *ad fin.*) record Phraates' demand; but the latter alone gives Pompey's reply—ὅρῳ χρήσεσθαι τῷ δικαίῳ.

[4] Plut. *Pomp.* § 39; Dio Cass. xxxvii. 7, D.

accepted Pompey's proposal of an arbitration; and in a short time an arrangement was effected by which relations of amity were re-established between the two countries.[1]

It would seem that not very long after the conclusion of this peace and the retirement of Pompey from Asia (B.C. 62), Phraates lost his life. He was assassinated by his two sons, Mithridates and Orodes;[2] for what cause we are not told. Mithridates, the elder of the two, succeeded him (about B.C. 60); and, as all fear of the Romans had now passed away in consequence of their apparently peaceful attitude, he returned soon after his accession to the policy of his namesake, Mithridates II., and resumed the struggle with Armenia from which his father had desisted.[3] The object of the war was probably the recovery of the lost province of Gordyêné, which, having been delivered to the elder Tigranes by Pompey, had remained in the occupation of the Armenians. Mithridates seems to have succeeded in his enterprise. When we next obtain a distinct view of the boundary line which divides Parthia from her neighbours towards the north and the north-west, which is within five years of the probable date of Mithridates' accession, we find Gordyêné once more a Parthian province.[4] As the later years of this intermediate lustre are a time of civil strife, during which territorial gains can scarcely have been made, we are compelled to refer

[1] Dio Cass. xxxvii. 7. Ἔν ἠπίσαντο ἀμφότεροι, says Dio, ὅτι ὁπότερος ἂν αὐτῶν τοῦ ἑτέρου κρατήσειε, τῶν τε πραγμάτων τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις προσκύψει (*leg.* προκύψει), καὶ αὐτὸς εὐχειρώτερος σφίσι γενήσεται. Ἐκεῖνοι μὲν δὴ διὰ ταῦτα κατηλλάγησαν.

[2] Ibid. xxxix. 56.

[3] Justin, xlii. 4, § 1. The fact that both Mithridates II. and III. were engaged in Armenian wars seems to have been among the reasons of Justin's confusing them.

[4] This was clearly the case at the time of the invasion of Crassus, when the Parthians were masters of the whole of Mesopotamia as far as the Euphrates.

the conquest to about B.C. 59-57. But in this case it must have been due to Mithridates III., whose reign is fixed with much probability to the years B.C. 60-56.

The credit which Mithridates had acquired by his conduct of the Armenian war, he lost soon afterwards by the severity of his home administration. There is reason to believe that he drove his brother, Orodes, into banishment.[1] At any rate, he ruled so harshly and cruelly that within a few years of his accession the Parthian nobles deposed him,[2] and recalling Orodes from his place of exile, set him up as king in his brother's room. Mithridates was, it would seem, at first allowed to govern Media as a subject monarch; but after a while his brother grew jealous of him, and deprived him of this dignity.[3] Unwilling to acquiesce in his disgrace, Mithridates fled to the Romans, and being favourably received by Gabinius, then proconsul of Syria, endeavoured to obtain his aid against his countrymen. Gabinius, who was at once weak and ambitious, lent a ready ear to his entreaties, and was upon the point of conducting an expedition into Parthia, when he received a still more tempting invitation from another quarter.[4] Ptolemy Auletes, expelled from Egypt by his rebellious subjects, asked his aid, and having recommendations from Pompey, and a fair sum of ready money to disburse, found little difficulty in persuading the Syrian proconsul to relinquish his Parthian plans and march the force at his disposal into Egypt. Mithridates, upon this, withdrew from Syria, and re-en-

[1] Plutarch tells us that the Parthian general who defeated Crassus had previously brought back Orodes from banishment (*Vit. Crass.* § 21). Appian follows him (*Parth.* p. 141, A).

[2] Justin, l.s.c. 'Propter crudelitatem a senatu Parthico regno pellitur.'

[3] Dio Cass. xxxix. 56. Μιθριδάτην τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἐκ τῆς Μηδίας, ἧς ἦρχεν, ἐξέβαλε.

[4] App. *Syriac.* p. 120, A; *Parthic.* p. 134, A.

tering the Parthian territory, commenced a civil war against his brother, finding numerous partisans, especially in the region about Babylon.[1] It may be suspected that Seleucia, the second city in the Empire, embraced his cause.[2] Babylon, into which he had thrown himself, sustained a long siege on his behalf, and only yielded when compelled by famine.[3] Mithridates might again have become a fugitive; but he was weary of the disappointments and hardships which are the ordinary lot of a pretender, and preferred to cast himself on the mercy and affection of his brother. Accordingly he surrendered himself unconditionally to Orodes; but this prince, professing to place the claims of patriotism above those of relationship,[4] caused the traitor who had sought aid from Rome to be instantly executed. Thus perished Mithridates III. after a reign which cannot have exceeded five years, in the winter of B.C. 56, or the early spring of B.C. 55. Orodes, on his death, was accepted as king by the whole nation.

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[1] Justin, xlii. 4, § 2.

[2] That Seleucia had been in rebellion against Orodes before B.C. 54, and had been recovered for him by the general whom he employed against Crassus, is related by Plutarch (*Crass.* § 21). It is reasonable to connect this rebellion with the civil war between the brothers. Mommsen, however, does so too positively. (*Röm. Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 323.)

[3] Justin incorrectly says, '*Babyloniam*, quo Mithridates confugerat, diu obsidet, et fame coactos in deditionem oppidanos compellit.' (l.s.c.) But it is evident that the town, Babylon ('Babylonem'), is intended.

[4] 'Plus hostem quam fratrem cogitans.' (Justin, xlii. 4, § 4.)

CHAPTER XI.

Accession of Orodes I. Expedition of Crassus. His fate. Retaliatory inroad of the Parthians into Syria under Pacorus, the son of Orodes. Defeat of Pacorus by Cassius. His recall. End of first War with Rome.

'Parthi . . . a Romanis, bellis per maximos duces florentissimis temporibus lacessiti, soli ex omnibus gentibus non pares solum, sed etiam victores fuere.'
Justin, xli. 1, § 7.

THE complete triumph of Orodes over Mithridates, and his full establishment in his kingdom, cannot be placed earlier than B.C. 56, and most probably fell in B.C. 55.[1] In this latter year Crassus obtained the consulship at Rome, and, being appointed at the same time to the command of the East,[2] made no secret of his intention to march the Roman legions across the Euphrates, and engage in hostilities with the great Parthian kingdom.[3] According to some writers, his views extended even further. He spoke of the wars which Lucullus had waged against Tigranes and Pompey against Mithridates of Pontus as mere child's play, and announced his intention of carrying the Roman arms to Bactria, India, and the Eastern Ocean.[4] The Parthian king was

[1] Gabinius, to whom Mithridates fled, was not proconsul of Syria till B.C. 56, and Mithridates therefore cannot have applied to him till that year. As the civil war followed on this application, and the siege of Babylon is expressly said to have occupied a long time (Justin), Mithridates can scarcely have submitted until B.C. 55.

[2] Liv. *Epit.* cv.; Dio Cass. xxxix. 33.

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 16.

[4] Ibid. Ὡς παιδιὰν ἀποφαινῶν τὰ Λουκούλλου πρὸς Τιγράνην καὶ Πομπηίου πρὸς Μιθριδάτην, ἄχρι Βακτρίων καὶ Ἰνδῶν καὶ τῆς ἔξω θαλάσσης ἀνῆγεν ἑαυτὸν ταῖς ἐλπίσι. Compare App. *Parth.* p. 135, C.

thus warned betimes of the impending danger, and enabled to make all such preparations against it as he deemed necessary. More than a year elapsed between the assignment to Crassus of Syria as his province, and his first overt act of hostility against Orodes.

It cannot be doubted that this breathing-time was well spent by the Parthian monarch. Besides forming his general plan of campaign at his leisure, and collecting, arming, and exercising his native forces, he was enabled to gain over certain chiefs upon his borders, who had hitherto held a semi-dependent position, and might have been expected to welcome the Romans. One of these, Abgarus,[1] prince of Osrhoêné, or the tract east of the Euphrates about the city of Edessa, had been received into the Roman alliance by Pompey, but, with the fickleness common among Orientals, he now readily changed sides, and undertook to play a double part for the advantage of the Parthians.[2] Another, Alchaudonius, an Arab sheikh of these parts, had made his submission to Rome even earlier;[3] but having become convinced that Parthia was the stronger power of the two, he also went over to Orodes.[4] The importance of these adhesions would depend greatly on the line of march which Crassus might determine to follow in making his attack. Three plans were open to him. He might either throw himself on the support of Artavasdes, the Armenian monarch, who had recently succeeded his father Tigranes, and entering Armenia, take the safe but circuitous route through the moun-

[1] The name is given variously, as Abgarus, Acbarus, and Avgarus (Αὔγαρος); but the first form is the only one used upon the coins of Edessa. Otherwise the form Acbarus might seem preferable, as the representative of the Arabic Akbar. All the princes of Edessa seem to have been called either Abgarus or Mannus.

[2] Dio Cass. xl. 20; App. *Parth.* p. 140, A.

[3] Dio Cass. xxxv. 2, *ad fin.*

[4] Ibid. xl. 20.

tains into Adiabêné, and so by the left bank of the Tigris to Ctesiphon; or he might, like the younger Cyrus, follow the course of the Euphrates to the latitude of Seleucia, and then cross the narrow tract of plain which there separates the two rivers; or, finally, he might attempt the shortest but most dangerous line across the Belik and Khabour, and directly through the Mesopotamian desert. If the Armenian route were preferred, neither Abgarus nor Alchaudonius would be able to do the Parthians much service; but if Crassus resolved on following either of the others, their alliance could not but be most valuable.

Crassus, however, on reaching his province, seemed in no haste to make a decision. He must have arrived in Syria tolerably early in the spring;[1] but his operations during the first year of his proconsulship were unimportant. He seems at once to have made up his mind to attempt nothing more than a reconnaissance. Crossing the Euphrates at Zeugma, the modern Bir or Bireh-jik, he proceeded to ravage the open country, and to receive the submission of the Greek cities, which were numerous throughout the region between the Euphrates and the Belik.[2] The country was defended by the Parthian satrap with a small force; but this was easily defeated, the satrap himself receiving a wound.[3]

[1] Crassus left Rome in the year of his consulship B.C. 55, later than Nov. 15 (Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* iv. 13). He took ship from Brundusium before the storms of winter were over (Plut. *Crass.* § 17), proceeded to Asia Minor, and marched rapidly through Galatia (ἠπείγετο διὰ Γαλατίας, *ib.*) into Syria, where he must have arrived as early as April or May. Mommsen, however, overstates the case, when he makes him reach Syria 'at the very beginning of 700' (bereits Anfang 700).

[2] Dio Cass. xl. 13. Compare Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 1. The chief of these cities were Apameia, Anthemusias or Charax Sidæ, Ichnæ, and Nicephorium.

[3] Dio Cass. xl. 12. This engagement took place near Ichnæ, which was on the Belik, about seventeen miles north of Rakkah (Nicephorium).

One Greek city only, Zenodotium, offered resistance to the invader; its inhabitants having requested and received a Roman garrison of one hundred men, rose upon them and put them barbarously to the sword; whereupon Crassus besieged and took the place, gave it up to his army to plunder, and sold the entire population for slaves.[1] He then, as winter drew near, determined to withdraw into Syria, leaving garrisons in the various towns. The entire force left behind is estimated at eight thousand men.[2]

It is probable that Orodes had expected a more determined attack, and had retained his army near his capital until it should become evident by which route the enemy would advance against him. Acting on an inner circle, he could readily have interposed his forces, on whichever line the assailants threw themselves. But the tardy proceedings of his antagonist made his caution superfluous. The first campaign was over, and there had scarcely been a collision between the troops of the two nations. Parthia had been insulted by a wanton attack, and had lost some disaffected cities; but no attempt had been made to fulfil the grand boasts with which the war had been undertaken.

It may be suspected that the Parthian monarch began now to despise his enemy. He would compare him with Lucullus and Pompey, and understand that a Roman army, like any other, was formidable, or the reverse, according as it was ably or feebly commanded. He would know that Crassus was a sexagenarian, and may have heard that he had never yet shown himself a captain or even a soldier. Perhaps he almost doubted whether the proconsul had any real intention

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 17; Dio Cass. xl. 13.

[2] Seven thousand foot and a thousand horse. (Plut. l.s.c.)

of pressing the contest to a decision, and might not rather be expected, when he had enriched himself and his troops with Mesopotamian plunder, to withdraw his garrisons across the Euphrates. Crassus was at this time showing the worst side of his character in Syria, despoiling temples of their treasures,[1] and accepting money in lieu of contingents of troops from the dynasts of Syria and Palestine.[2] Orodes, under these circumstances, sent an embassy to him, which was well calculated to stir to action the most sluggish and poor-spirited of commanders. 'If the war,' said his envoys, 'was really waged by Rome, it must be fought out to the bitter end. But if, as they had good reason to believe,[3] Crassus, against the wish of his country, had attacked Parthia and seized her territory for his own private gain, Arsaces would be moderate. *He would have pity on the advanced years of the proconsul*, and would give the Romans back those men of theirs, who were not so much keeping watch in Mesopotamia, as having watch kept on them.' Crassus, stung with the taunt, exclaimed, 'He would return the ambassadors an answer at Seleucia.' Wagises, the chief ambassador, prepared for some such exhibition of feeling, and glad to heap taunt on taunt, replied, striking the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other: 'Hairs will grow here, Crassus, before you see Seleucia.'[4]

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[1] It is certain that Crassus plundered the ancient shrine of Atargatis or Derceto at Hierapolis (Plut. *Crass.* § 17; App. *Parth.* p. 137, B). According to Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* xiv. 7, § 1), he also made a journey to Jerusalem for the express purpose of plundering the Jewish Temple. (Compare Orosius, vi. 13.)

[2] Ἐπιγράφων καὶ δήμοις καὶ δυναστείαις στρατιωτῶν καταλόγους, εἶτ' ἀνιεὶς ἀργύριον διδόντας. (Plut. *Crass.* l.s.c.)

[3] The intention of Crassus to attack the Parthians was well known at Rome, and was opposed by a powerful party. (See Plut. *Crass.* § 16; Cic. *Ep. ad Div.* v. 8; &c.)

[4] Plut. *Crass.* § 18; Dio Cass. xl. 16.

Still further to quicken the action of the Romans, before the winter was well over, the offensive was taken against their adherents in Mesopotamia. The towns which held Roman garrisons were attacked by the Parthians in force; and, though we do not hear of any being captured, all of them were menaced, and all suffered considerably.[1]

If Crassus needed to be stimulated, these stimulants were effective; and he entered on his second campaign with a full determination to compel the Parthian monarch to an engagement, and, if possible, to dictate peace to him at his capital. He had not, however, in his second campaign, the same freedom with regard to his movements that he had enjoyed the year previous. The occupation of Western Mesopotamia cramped his choice. It had, in fact, compelled him before quitting Syria to decline, definitely and decidedly, the overtures of Artavasdes, who strongly urged on him to advance by way of Armenia, and promised him in that case an important addition to his forces.[2] Crassus felt himself compelled to support his garrisons, and therefore to make Mesopotamia, and not Armenia, the basis of his operations. He crossed the Euphrates a second time at the same point as before,[3] with an

[1] Dean Merivale speaks of some of the Roman detachments in Mesopotamia as 'compelled to abandon their posts' (*Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 11); but I find no such statement in the authorities. Dio says that a Parthian army was sent against the places that had been taken and those that had fallen away (l.s.c.); Plutarch adds that attacks and combats took place, and that some of the soldiers in garrison, escaping from the beleaguered towns, brought Crassus an exaggerated account of the difficulties of Parthian warfare (l.s.c.)

[2] Artavasdes offered a contingent of 30,000 foot and 10,000 horse, of whom 10,000 should be heavily armed. Crassus replied 'that his march would lie through Mesopotamia, *as he had left there many good soldiers*.' (Plut. l.s.c.)

[3] This point, as already stated, was probably the modern Bir, or Bireh-jik, which best answers on the whole to the Roman 'Zeugma.' (See the note of C. Müller on Isid. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 1.) It is not to be confounded with *Rum-kaleh* (twenty-six miles higher up the

army composed of 35,000 heavy infantry, 4,000 light infantry, and 4,000 horse.[1] There was still open to him a certain choice of routes. The one preferred by his chief officers was the line of the Euphrates, known as that which the Ten Thousand had pursued in an expedition that would have been successful but for the death of its commander. Along this line water would be plentiful; forage and other supplies might be counted on to a certain extent; and the advancing army, resting on the river, could not be surrounded.[2] Another, but one that does not appear to have been suggested till too late,[3] was that which Alexander had taken against Darius;[4] the line along the foot of the Mons Masius, by Edessa, and Nisibis, to Nineveh. Here too water and supplies would have been readily procurable, and by clinging to the skirts of the hills the Roman infantry would have set the Parthian cavalry at defiance. Between these two extreme courses to the right and to the left, were numerous slightly divergent lines across the Mesopotamian plain, all shorter than either of the two above-mentioned, and none offering any great advantage over the remainder.

It is uncertain what choice the proconsul would have made, had the decision been left simply to his own judgment. Probably the Romans had a most dim and indistinct conception of the geographical

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river), nor with Thapsacus (160 miles lower down), where Alexander crossed. Dio (xl. 17) has misled Dean Merivale. (*R. E.* vol. ii. p. 13, note.)

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 20. The seven legions of this writer may be estimated roughly at 35,000 footmen. Florus (iii. 11) raises the number of legions to eleven, and Appian (*Bell. Civ.* iii. 18) makes the entire force amount to 100,000 men.

[2] "Αμα φύλακα τοῦ μὴ κυκλωθῆναι τὸν ποταμὸν σχόντας. (Plut. *Crass.* l.s.c.)

[3] Ibid. § 22. Artavasdes is said to have suggested this route.

[4] Arrian, *Exp. Alex.* iii. 7.

character of the Mesopotamian region, and were ignorant of its great difficulties. They remained also, it must be remembered, up to this time, absolutely unacquainted with the Parthian tactics, and accustomed as they were to triumph over every enemy against whom they fought, it would scarcely occur to them that in an open field they could suffer defeat. They were ready, like Alexander, to encounter any number of Asiatics, and only asked to be led against the foe as quickly as possible. When, therefore, Abgarus, the Osrhoëne prince, soon after Crassus had crossed the Euphrates, rode into his camp, and declared that the Parthians did not intend to make a stand, but were quitting Mesopotamia and flying with their treasures to the remote regions of Hyrcania and Scythia, leaving only a rear guard under a couple of generals to cover the retreat,[1] it is not surprising that the resolution was taken to give up the circuitous route of the Euphrates, and to march directly across Mesopotamia in the hope of crushing the covering detachment, and coming upon the flying multitude encumbered with baggage, which would furnish a rich spoil to the victors. In after times it was said that C. Cassius Longinus and some other officers were opposed to this movement,[2] and foresaw its danger; but it may be questioned whether the whole army did not readily obey its leader's order, and commence without any forebodings its march through Upper Mesopotamia. That region has not really the character which the apologists for Roman disaster in later times gave to it. It is a region of swelling hills, and somewhat dry gravelly plains. It possesses several streams and

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 21.

[2] Ibid. § 20 and § 22.

rivers, besides numerous springs.[1] At intervals of a few miles it was studded with cities and villages;[2] nor did the desert really begin until the Khabour was crossed. The army of Crassus had traversed it throughout its whole extent during the summer of the preceding year, and must have been well acquainted with both its advantages and its drawbacks.

But it is time that we should consider what preparations the Parthian monarch had made against the threatened attack. He had, as already stated, come to terms with his outlying vassals, the prince of Osrhoêné, and the sheikh of the Scenite Arabs, and had engaged especially the services of the former against his assailant. He had further, on considering the various possibilities of the campaign, come to the conclusion that it would be best to divide his forces, and, while himself attacking Artavasdes in the mountain fastnesses of his own country, to commit the task of meeting and coping with the Romans to a general of approved talents.[3] It was of the greatest importance to prevent the Armenians from effecting a junction with the Romans, and strengthening them in that arm, in which they were especially deficient, the cavalry. Perhaps nothing short of an invasion of his country by the Parthian king in person would have prevented Artavasdes from detaching a portion of his troops to act in Mesopotamia. And no doubt it is also true that Orodes had great confidence in his general, whom he may even have felt to be a better commander than

[1] See Chesney, *Euphrates Expedition*, vol. i. pp. 46–49; Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie*, pp. 320–334; Pocock, *Description of the East*, vol. ii. pp. 158–163.

[2] On the line of route between Zeugma and Nicephorium, which must have nearly coincided with the march of Crassus, Isidore places three cities, one village, and four fortified posts. (*Mans. Parth.* § 1.)

[3] Plut. *Crass.* 21; Dio Cass. xl. 16.

himself. Surenas, as we must call him, since his name has not been preserved to us,[1] was in all respects a person of the highest consideration. He was the second man in the kingdom for birth, wealth, and reputation. In courage and ability he excelled all his countrymen; and he had the physical advantages of commanding height and great personal beauty. When he went to battle, he was accompanied by a train of a thousand camels, which carried his baggage; and the concubines in attendance on him required for their conveyance two hundred chariots. A thousand horsemen clad in mail, and a still greater number of light-armed, formed his bodyguard. At the coronation of a Parthian monarch, it was his hereditary right to place the diadem on the brow of the new sovereign. When Orodes was driven into banishment, it was he who brought him back to Parthia in triumph. When Seleucia revolted, it was he who at the assault first mounted the breach, and striking terror into the defenders, took the city. Though less than thirty years of age at the time when he was appointed commander, he was believed to possess, besides these various qualifications, consummate prudence and sagacity.[2]

The force which Orodes committed to his brave and skilful lieutenant consisted entirely of horse. This was not the ordinary character of a Parthian army, which often comprised four or five times as many infantry as cavalry. It was, perhaps, rather fortunate accident than profound calculation that caused the

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[1] It has been already observed that Surenas, or Surena, was properly an official title. (See above, p. 86.) Plutarch, however, Dio, and the Pseudo-Appian use it as a proper name.

[2] This account is taken from Plutarch (*Crass.* § 21).

sole employment against the Romans of this arm.[1] The foot soldiers were needed for the rough warfare of the Armenian mountains; the horse would, it was known, act with fair effect in the comparatively open and level Mesopotamia. As the king wanted the footmen he took them, and left to his general the troops which were not required for his own operations.

The Parthian horse, like the Persian,[2] was of two kinds, standing in strong contrast the one to the other. The bulk of their cavalry was of the lightest and most agile description. Fleet and active coursers, with scarcely any caparison but a headstall and a single rein, were mounted by riders clad only in a tunic and trousers,[3] and armed with nothing but a strong bow and a quiver full of arrows. A training begun in early boyhood made the rider almost one with his steed; and he could use his weapons with equal ease and effect whether his horse was stationary or at full gallop, and whether he was advancing towards or hurriedly retreating from his enemy.[4] His supply of missiles was almost inexhaustible, for when he found his quiver empty, he had only to retire a short distance and replenish his stock from magazines, borne on the backs of camels, in the rear.[5] It was his ordinary plan to keep constantly in motion when in the presence of an enemy, to gallop backwards and forwards, or round and round his square or column, never charging

[1] Mommsen regards the employment of cavalry only against Crassus as a 'brilliant idea' (genialen Gedanken) of the Parthian commander (*Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 328).

[2] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. pp. 178–179, 2nd edit.

[3] On the ordinary Scythic equipment of a light horseman, see the author's *Herodotus*. vol. iii. p. 34, 2nd edit. There is no reason to suppose that the Parthian was different.

[4] Plut. *Crass.* § 24, *ad fin.*; Virg. *Georg.* iii. 31; Hor. *Od.* i. 19, 11; ii. 13, 16; Justin, xli. 2; Tac. *An.* vi. 35, &c.

[5] Plut. *Crass.* § 25.

it, but at a moderate interval plying it with his keen and barbed shafts;[1] which were driven by a practised hand from a bow of unusual strength. Clouds of this light cavalry enveloped the advancing or the retreating foe, and inflicted grievous damage without, for the most part, suffering anything in return.

But this was not the whole. In addition to these light troops, a Parthian army comprised always a body of heavy cavalry,[2] armed on an entirely different system. The strong horses selected for this service were clad almost wholly in mail. Their head, neck, chest, even their sides and flanks, were protected by scale-armour of brass or iron, sewn, probably, upon leather.[3] Their riders had cuirasses and cuisses of the same materials, and helmets of burnished iron.[4] For an offensive weapon they carried a long and strong spear or pike.[5] They formed a serried line in battle, bearing down with great weight on the enemy whom they charged, and standing firm as an iron wall against the charges that were made upon them. A cavalry answering to this in some respects had been employed by the later Persian monarchs,[6] and was in use also among the Armenians at this period; but the Parthian pike was apparently more formidable than the corresponding weapons of those nations, and the light spear carried at this time by the cavalry of a Roman army was no match for it.

[1] Plutarch speaks of the 'barbed points' (ἠγκιστρωμένας ἀκίδας) of the Parthian arrows. (l.s.c.)

[2] The Greeks called these horsemen καταφράκτους, 'protected, covered up.' They are best described by Heliodorus (*Æthiop.* ix. pp. 431–433).

[3] See Justin, xli. 2, § 10. 'Munimentum ipsis equisque loricæ plumatæ sunt, quæ utrumque toto corpore tegunt.' Compare Virg. *Æn.* xi. 770.

[4] Plut. *Crass.* § 24. Κράνεσι τοῦ Μαργιανοῦ σιδήρου στίλβοντος ὀξὺ καὶ πυριλαμπές.

[5] The *contus* (κόντος) of the Greeks and Romans.

[6] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. p. 178, 2nd edit.

The force entrusted to Surenas comprised troops of both these classes. No estimate is given us of their number, but it was probably considerable.[1] At any rate it was sufficient to induce him to make a movement in advance—to cross the Sinjar range and the river Khabour, and take up his position in the country between that stream and the Belik—instead of merely seeking to cover the capital. The presence of the traitor Abgarus in the camp of Crassus, was now of the utmost importance to the Parthian commander. Abgarus, fully trusted, and at the head of a body of light horse, admirably adapted for outpost service, was allowed, upon his own request, to scour the country in front of the advancing Romans, and had thus the means of communicating freely with the Parthian chief. He kept Surenas informed of all the movements and intentions of Crassus,[2] while at the same time he suggested to Crassus such a line of route as suited the views and designs of his adversary. Our chief authority for the details of the expedition tells us,[3] that he led the Roman troops through an arid and trackless desert, across plains without tree, or shrub, or even grass, where the soil was composed of a light shifting sand, which the wind raised into a succession of hillocks that resembled the waves of an interminable sea. The soldiers, he says, fainted with the heat and with the drought, while the audacious Osrhoëne scoffed at their complaints and reproaches, asking them whether they expected to find the border-tract between Arabia and Assyria a country of cool streams and

[1] They are called 'a vast number' (πλῆθος πολύ, Plut. *Crass.* § 23), and 'an immense body' (*copiæ immanes*, Vell. Pat. ii. 46). The Parthians brought 50,000 horse into the field against Antony (Justin, xli. 2, § 6).

[2] Dio Cass. xl. 21.

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 22.

shady groves, of baths and hostelries, like their own delicious Campania. But our knowledge of the geographical character of the region through which the march lay makes it impossible for us to accept this account as true.[1] The country between the Euphrates and the Belik, as already observed, is one of alternate hill and plain, neither destitute of trees nor ill-provided with water. The march through it could have presented no great difficulties. All that Abgarus could do to serve the Parthian cause was, first, to induce Crassus to trust himself to the open country, without clinging either to a river or to the mountains, and, secondly, to bring him, after a hasty march, and in the full heat of the day, into the presence of the enemy. Both these things he contrived to effect, and Surenas was, no doubt, so far beholden to him. But the notion that he enticed the Roman army into a trackless desert, and gave it over, when it was perishing through weariness, hunger, and thirst, into the hands of its enraged enemy,[2] is in contradiction with the topographical facts, and is not even maintained consistently by the classical writers.[3]

It was probably on the third or fourth day after he had quitted the Euphrates,[4] that Crassus found

[1] The arguments of Dean Merivale are conclusive (*Roman Empire*, vol. ii. pp. 18, 19); but he somewhat mars their effect by suggesting that Plutarch may have confounded the Belik with the Khabour, and that the battle may have really been fought on the latter stream. The general tradition that the scene of the fight was near Carrhæ, and the special mention of Ichnæ as also in the neighbourhood (Plut. *Crass.* § 25), make it certain that the scene is rightly placed on the Belik, since both those cities were on that river.

[2] See Mommsen, *Röm. Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 327. This writer shows no knowledge of the real character of the country.

[3] Dio has no mention of sands or deserts. On the contrary, he makes the scene of the battle hilly ground, partly covered with trees (xl. 21).

[4] The direct distance from Zeugma to the probable scene of the engagement (half-way between Carrhæ and Ichnæ) is less than eighty miles. The army, however, did not take this line, but marched at first along the left bank of the

himself approaching his enemy. After a hasty and hot march[1] he had approached the banks of the Belik, when his scouts brought him word that they had fallen in with the Parthian army, which was advancing in force and seemingly full of confidence. Abgarus had recently quitted him on the plea of doing him some undefined service, but really to range himself on the side of his real friends, the Parthians.[2] His officers now advised Crassus to encamp upon the river, and defer an engagement till the morrow; but he had no fears; his son, Publius, who had lately joined him with a body of Gallic horse sent by Julius Cæsar, was anxious for the fray; and accordingly the Roman commander gave the order to his troops to take some refreshment as they stood, and then to push forward rapidly.[3] Surenas, on his side, had taken up a position on wooded and hilly ground, which concealed his numbers,[4] and had even, we are told, made his troops cover their arms with cloths and skins,[5] that the glitter might not betray them. But, as the Romans drew near, all concealment was cast aside; the signal for battle was given; the clang of the kettledrums arose on every side; the squadrons came forward in their brilliant array; and it seemed at first as if the heavy cavalry was about to charge the Roman host,[6] which was formed in a hollow square with the light-armed in the middle, and with supports

Euphrates. From the nearest bend of the Euphrates to the scene of action is less than fifty miles.

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 23; Dio Cass. xl. 23.

[2] Plut. *Crass.* p. 22, *ad fin.* This account is more probable than that of Dio, that he remained with the Romans till after the death of the young Crassus, and then fell upon their rear while the Parthians attacked in front. (Dio Cass. xl. 23.)

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 23.

[4] Dio Cass. xl. 21. Ἡ τε χώρα ἀνώμαλός πη ἦν καὶ ὕπερθεν εἶχεν.

[5] Plut. *Crass.* l.s.c.

[6] So Plut. (*Crass.* § 24). But it may be doubted if the intention really existed.

of horse along the whole line, as well as upon the flanks.[1] But, if this intention was ever entertained, it was altered almost as soon as formed, and the better plan was adopted of halting at a convenient distance and assailing the legionaries with flight after flight of arrows, delivered without a pause and with extraordinary force. The Roman endeavoured to meet this attack by throwing forward his own skirmishers; but they were quite unable to cope with the numbers and the superior weapons of the enemy, who forced them almost immediately to retreat, and take refuge behind the line of the heavy-armed.[2] These were then once more exposed to the deadly missiles, which pierced alike through shield and breast-plate and greaves, and inflicted the most fearful wounds. More than once the legionaries dashed forward, and sought to close with their assailants, but in vain. The Parthian squadrons retired as the Roman infantry advanced, maintaining the distance which they thought best between themselves and their foe, whom they plied with their shafts as incessantly while they fell back as when they rode forward. For a while the Romans entertained the hope that the missiles would at last be all spent;[3] but when they found that each archer constantly obtained a fresh supply from the rear, this expectation deserted them. It became evident to Crassus that some new movement must be attempted; and, as a last resource, he commanded his son, Publius, whom the Parthians were threatening to outflank, to take such troops as he thought proper, and charge. The gallant youth was only too glad to receive the order. Selecting his Gallic cavalry, who numbered

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 23.
[2] Ibid. § 24.
[3] Ibid. § 25. Compare Lucan, *Phars.* viii. 386–387.

1,000, and adding to them 500 other horsemen, 500 archers, and about 4,000 legionaries,[1] he advanced at speed against the nearest squadrons of the enemy. The Parthians pretended to be afraid, and beat a hasty retreat. Publius followed with all the impetuosity of youth, and was soon out of the sight of his friends, pressing the flying foe, whom he believed to be panic-stricken. But when they had drawn him on sufficiently, they suddenly made a stand, brought their heavy cavalry up against his line, and completely enveloped him and his detachment with their light-armed. Publius made a desperate resistance. His Gauls seized the Parthian pikes with their hands and dragged the encumbered horsemen to the ground; or dismounting, slipped beneath the horses of their opponents, and stabbing them in the belly, brought steed and rider down upon themselves. His legionaries occupied a slight hillock, and endeavoured to make a wall of their shields, but the Parthian archers closed around them, and slew them almost to a man. Of the whole detachment, nearly six thousand strong, no more than 500 were taken prisoners,[2] and scarcely one escaped. The young Crassus might, possibly, had he chosen to make the attempt, have forced his way through the enemy to Ichnæ, a Greek town not far distant;[3] but he preferred to share the fate of his men. Rather than fall into the hands of the enemy, he caused his shield-bearer to despatch him; and his example was followed by his principal officers. The victors struck off his head, and elevating it on a pike,

[1] 'Eight cohorts' (Plutarch) would be about this number.

[2] Dio says that not a single prisoner was taken on the first day (xl. 24); but Plutarch allows the capture of 500 (*Crass.* § 25, *ad fin.*).

[3] On the position of Ichnæ, see Is. Char. *Mans. Parth.* § 1; and compare Mons. C. Müller's note *ad loc.*

returned to resume their attack on the main body of the Roman army.

The main body, much relieved by the diminution of the pressure upon them, had waited patiently for Publius to return in triumph, regarding the battle as well nigh over and success as certain. After a time, the prolonged absence of the young captain aroused suspicions, which grew into alarms when messengers arrived telling of his extreme danger.[1] Crassus, almost beside himself with anxiety, had given the word to advance, and the army had moved forward a short distance, when the shouts of the returning enemy were heard, and the head of the unfortunate officer was seen displayed aloft, while the Parthian squadrons, closing in once more, renewed the assault on their remaining foes with increased vigour. The mailed horsemen approached close to the legionaries and thrust at them with their long pikes,[2] while the light-armed, galloping across the Roman front, discharged their unerring arrows over the heads of their own men. The Romans could neither successfully defend themselves, nor effectively retaliate. Still time brought some relief. Bowstrings broke, spears were blunted or splintered, arrows began to fail, thews and sinews to relax;[3] and when night closed in both parties were almost equally glad of the cessation of arms which the darkness rendered compulsory.

It was the custom of the Parthians, as of the Persians,[4] to bivouack at a considerable distance from an

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 26.

[2] Plut. *Crass.* §27; Dio Cass. xl. 22.

[3] Dio Cass. xl. 24. Οἵ τε κοντοὶ τῶν βαρβάρων οἱ μὲν ἀπεστρέφησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐκλάσθησαν, καὶ αἱ νευραὶ . . . ἐῤῥάγησαν· τά τε βέλη ἐξετοξεύθη, καὶ τὰ ξίφη πάντα ἀπημβλύνθη· τό τε μέγιστον, οἱ ἄνδρες αὐτοὶ φονεύοντες ἐξέκαμον.

[4] On the Persian practice, see *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii. p. 191, 2nd edit. Fear of a night attack, and the difficulty of unfastening and caparisoning their horses in a hurry, were at the root of the custom.

enemy. Accordingly, at nightfall they drew off, having first shouted to the Romans that they would grant the general one night in which to bewail his son; on the morrow they would come and take him prisoner, unless he preferred the better course of surrendering himself to the mercy of Arsaces.[1] A short breathing-space was thus allowed the Romans, who took advantage of it to retire towards Carrhæ, leaving behind them the greater part of their wounded, to the number of 4,000. A small body of horse reached Carrhæ about midnight, and gave the commandant such information as led him to put his men under arms and issue forth to the succour of the proconsul. The Parthians, though the cries of the wounded made them well aware of the Roman retreat, adhered to their system of avoiding night combats, and attempted no pursuit till morning.[2] Even then they allowed themselves to be delayed by comparatively trivial matters — the capture of the Roman camp, the massacre of the wounded, and the slaughter of the numerous stragglers scattered along the line of march—and made no haste to overtake the retreating army. The bulk of the troops were thus enabled to effect their retreat in safety to Carrhæ, where, having the protection of walls, they were, at any rate for a time, secure.

It might have been expected that the Romans would here have made a stand. The siege of a fortified place

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[1] Plut. *Crass.* l.s.c.

[2] So Plutarch (§ 28). Οἱ Πάρθοι, νυκτὸς μὲν αἰσθόμενοι τὴν ἀπόδρασιν, οὐκ ἐδίωκον. Dean Merivale has, I think, misunderstood a somewhat obscure passage in the preceding section—where the retreating army is said to have *thought* the enemy was upon them (ὡς ἐπιφερομένων τῶν πολεμίων)—and has made the Parthians start in pursuit, but soon give up the attempt, because 'their horses, after a long day's service, were unable to keep pace with the headlong rush of desperate men.' This is not very probable, and it is certainly not contained in the authorities.

by cavalry is ridiculous, if we understand by siege anything more than a very incomplete blockade. And the Parthians were notoriously inefficient against walls.[1] There was a chance, moreover, that Artavasdes might have been more successful than his ally, and having repulsed the Parthian monarch, might march his troops to the relief of the Romans. But the soldiers were thoroughly dispirited, and would not listen to these suggestions.[2] Provisions no doubt ran short, since, as there had been no expectation of a disaster, no preparations had been made for standing a siege. The Greek inhabitants of the place could not be trusted to exhibit fidelity to a falling cause. Moreover, Armenia was near; and the Parthian system of abstaining from action during the night seemed to render escape tolerably easy. It was resolved, therefore, instead of clinging to the protection of the walls, to issue forth once more, and to endeavour by a rapid night march to reach the Armenian hills. The various officers seem to have been allowed to arrange matters for themselves. Cassius took his way towards the Euphrates, and succeeded in escaping with 500 horse. Octavius, with a division which is estimated at 5,000 men, reached the outskirts of the hills at a place called Sinnaca,[3] and found himself in comparative security. Crassus, misled by his guides, made but poor progress during the night; he had, however, arrived within little more than a mile of

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[1] See Lucan, *Pharsalia*, viii. 377–379:—
'Non aries illis, non ulla est machina belli:
Haud fossas implere valent; Parthoque sequente
Murus erit, quodcunque potest obstare sagittæ.'
Compare Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 4.

[2] Plut. *Crass.* § 29.

[3] I do not understand why Dr. Mommsen speaks of Sinnaca as a 'fort' (*Festung*, vol. iii. p. 330). Plutarch seems to regard it as a mere hill (note the expression ἄλλον λόφον, ὑποκείμενον τοῖς Σιννάκοις); and Strabo only calls it a 'place' (χωρίον, xvi. 1, § 23).

Octavius before the enemy, who would not stir till day-break, overtook him. Pressed upon by their advancing squadrons, he, with his small hand of 2,000 legionaries and a few horsemen, occupied a low hillock connected by a ridge of rising ground with the position of Sinnaca. Here the Parthian host beset him; and he would infallibly have been slain or captured at once, had not Octavius, deserting his place of safety, descended to the aid of his commander. The united 7,000 held their own against the enemy, having the advantage of the ground, and having perhaps by the experience of some days learnt the weak points of Parthian warfare.

Surenas was anxious, above all things, to secure the person of the Roman commander. In the East an excessive importance is attached to this proof of success; and there were reasons which made Crassus particularly obnoxious to his antagonists. He was believed to have originated, and not merely conducted, the war, incited thereto by simple greed of gold.[1] He had refused with the utmost haughtiness all discussion of terms, and had insulted the majesty of the Parthians by the declaration that he would treat nowhere but at their capital. If he escaped, he would be bound at some future time to repeat his attempt; if he were made prisoner, his fate would be a terrible warning to others. But now, as evening approached, it seemed to the Parthian that the prize which he so much desired was about to elude his grasp. The highlands of Armenia would be gained by the fugitives during the night, and further pursuit of them would be hopeless. It remained that he should effect by craft what he could no longer hope to gain by the employment of force; and to this point

[1] See above, p. 154.

all his efforts were now directed. He drew off his troops and left the Romans without further molestation. He allowed some of his prisoners to escape and rejoin their friends, having first contrived that they should overhear a conversation among his men, of which the theme was the Parthian clemency, and the wish of Orodes to come to terms with the Romans. He then, having allowed time for the report of his pacific intentions to spread, rode with a few chiefs towards the Roman camp, carrying his bow unstrung and his right hand stretched out in token of amity. 'Let the Roman general,' he said, 'come forward with an equal number of attendants, and confer with me in the open space between the armies on terms of peace.' The aged proconsul was disinclined to trust these overtures; but his men clamoured and threatened, upon which he yielded, and went down into the plain, accompanied by Octavius and a few others. Here he was received with apparent honour, and terms were arranged; but Surenas required that they should at once be reduced to writing, 'since,' he said, with pointed allusion to the bad faith of Pompey, 'you Romans are not very apt to remember your engagements.' A movement being requisite for the drawing up of the formal instruments, Crassus and his officers were induced to mount upon horses furnished by the Parthians, who had no sooner seated the proconsul on his steed, than they proceeded to hurry him forward, with the evident intention of carrying him off to their camp.[1] The Roman officers took the alarm and resisted. Octavius snatched a sword

[1] Mommsen seems to doubt whether the Parthians really intended any treachery (*Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 330). But the Romans can scarcely have been mistaken upon the point. Such treachery has been constant in the East from the time of the Ten Thousand to the Affghan war of 1841.

from a Parthian and killed one of the grooms who was hurrying Crassus away. A blow from behind stretched him on the ground lifeless. A general mêlée followed, and in the confusion Crassus was killed, whether by one of his own side and with his own consent, or by the hand of a Parthian, is uncertain.[1] The army, learning the fate of their general, with but few exceptions, surrendered. Such as sought to escape under cover of the approaching night were hunted down by the Bedouins who served under the Parthian standard, and killed almost to a man. Of the entire army which had crossed the Euphrates, consisting of above 40,000 men, not more than a fourth returned. One half of the whole number perished.[2] Nearly 10,000 prisoners were settled by the victors in the fertile oasis of Margiana,[3] near the northern frontier of the empire, where they intermarried with native wives,[4] and became submissive Parthian subjects.[5]

Such was the result of this great expedition, the first attempt of the grasping and ambitious Romans, not so much to conquer Parthia, as to strike terror into the heart of her people, and to degrade them to the condition of obsequious dependants on the will and pleasure of the 'world's lords.'[6] The expedition failed so utterly, not from any want of bravery on the part of the soldiers employed in it, nor from any absolute superiority of the Parthian over the Roman tactics, but partly from the incompetence of the commander,

[1] Plutarch makes him killed by a Parthian named Pomaxæthres, but confesses that the exact truth was not known (*Crass.* § 31). Dio gives both accounts (xl, 27).

[2] Plut. *Crass.* § 31, *ad fin.*

[3] Plin. *H. N.* vi. 16.

[4] See the well-known passage of Horace (*Od.* iii. 5, 5):—
'Milesne Crassi conjuge barbara' &c.

[5] The Roman captives served as soldiers in the Parthian armies (Vell. Pat. ii. 82; Florus, iv. 10).

[6] '*Romanos rerum dominos*' (Virg. *Æn.* i. 282).

partly from the inexperience of the Romans, up to this date, in the nature of the Parthian warfare and in the best manner of meeting it. To attack an enemy whose main arm is the cavalry with a body of foot-soldiers, supported by an insignificant number of horse, must be at all times rash and dangerous. To direct such an attack on the more open part of the country, where cavalry could operate freely, was wantonly to aggravate the peril. After the first disaster, to quit the protection of walls, when it had been obtained, was a piece of reckless folly. Had Crassus taken care to obtain the support of some of the desert tribes,[1] if Armenia could not help him, and had he then advanced either by the way of the Mons Masius and the Tigris, or along the line of the Euphrates, the issue of his attack might have been different. He might have fought his way to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, as did Trajan, Avidius Cassius, and Septimius Severus, and might have taken and plundered those cities. He would no doubt have experienced difficulties in his retreat; but he might have come off no worse than Trajan, whose Parthian expedition has been generally regarded as rather augmenting than detracting from his reputation. But an ignorant and inexperienced commander, venturing on a trial of arms with an enemy of whom he knew little or nothing, in their own country, without supports or allies, and then neglecting every precaution suggested by his officers, allowing himself to be deceived by a pretended friend, and marching straight into a net prepared for him, naturally suffered defeat. The credit of the Roman arms does not greatly suffer by the disaster, nor is that of the Parthians greatly enhanced. The latter showed,

[1] As Julian did (Amm. Marc. xxiii. 5).

as they had shown in their wars against the Syro-Macedonians, that their somewhat loose and irregular array was capable of acting with effect against the solid masses and well-ordered movements of disciplined troops. They acquired by their use of the bow a fame like that which the English archers obtained for the employment of the same weapon at Crecy and Agincourt. They forced the arrogant Romans to respect them, and to allow that there was at least one nation in the world which could meet them on equal terms and not be worsted in the encounter.[1] They henceforth obtained recognition from the Græco-Roman writers—albeit a grudging and covert recognition—as the second Power in the world, the admitted rival of Rome,[2] the only real counterpoise upon the earth to the power which ruled from the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean.

While the general of King Orodes was thus successful against the Romans in Mesopotamia, the king himself had in Armenia obtained advantages of almost equal value, though of a different kind. Instead of contending with Artavasdes, he had come to terms with him, and had concluded a close alliance, which he had sought to confirm and secure by uniting his son, Pacorus, in marriage with a sister of the Armenian monarch.[3] A series of festivities was being held to celebrate this auspicious event, when news came of Surenas' triumph, and of the fate of Crassus. According to the barbarous customs of the East, the head and hand of the slain

[1] See Justin, xli. 1, § 7:—'Parthi, a Romanis trinis bellis, per maximos duces florentissimis temporibus lacessiti, *soli ex omnibus gentibus non pares solum, verum etiam victores fuere.*' And Dio (xl. 14):—*τελευτῶντες δέ, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτο καὶ τῆς δόξης καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ἐχώρησαν, ὥστε καὶ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τότε ἀντιπολεμῆσαι, καὶ δεῦρο ἀεὶ ἀντίπαλοι νομίζεσθαι.*

[2] Compare, besides the passages above quoted, Strab. xi. 9, § 2; Plin. *H. N.* v. 25; and Herodian, iv. 18.

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 33.

proconsul accompanied the intelligence. We are told that at the moment of the messengers' arrival the two sovereigns, with their attendants, were amusing themselves with a dramatic entertainment. Both monarchs had a good knowledge of the Greek literature and language, in which Artavasdes had himself composed historical works and tragedies. The actors were representing the famous scene in the 'Bacchæ' of Euripides,[1] where Agavé and the Bacchanals come upon the stage with the mutilated remains of the murdered Pentheus, when the head of Crassus was thrown in among them. Instantly the player who personated Agavé seized the bloody trophy, and, placing it on his thyrsus instead of the one he was carrying, paraded it before the delighted spectators, while he chanted the well-known lines:—[2]

> From the mountain to the hall
> New-cut tendril, see, we bring—
> Blessed prey!

The horrible spectacle was one well suited to please an Eastern audience: it was followed by a proceeding of equal barbarity and still more thoroughly Oriental.[3] The Parthians, in derision of the motive which was supposed to have led Crassus to make his attack, had a quantity of gold melted and poured it into his mouth.[4]

Meanwhile Surenas was amusing his victorious troops, and seeking to annoy the disaffected Seleucians, by the

[1] Eurip. *Bacch.* 1169–1200 (ed. Dindorf).

[2] Ibid. 1170–1172:—

> Φέρομεν ἐξ ὄρεος
> ἔλικα νεότομον ἐπὶ μίλαθρα,
> μακαρίαν θήραν.

[3] Compare the proceedings of Tomyris with the head of Cyrus, as related in Herodotus, i. 214; and for more exact parallels see Appian, *Mithridat.* p. 184, C; and Mich. Palæol. ii. 24.

[4] So Florus (iii. 11, § 11) and Dio (xl. 27). Plutarch omits the circumstance; but I think, with Dean Merivale, that there is no reason why we should disbelieve it. (*Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 26.)

performance of a farcical ceremony. He spread the report that Crassus was not killed but captured; and, selecting from among the prisoners the Roman most like him in appearance, he dressed the man in woman's clothes, mounted him upon a horse, and requiring him to answer to the names of 'Crassus' and 'Imperator,' conducted him in triumph to the Grecian city. Before him went, mounted on camels, a band, arrayed as trumpeters and lictors, the lictors' rods having purses suspended to them, and the axes in their midst being crowned with the bleeding heads of Romans. In the rear followed a train of Seleucian music-girls, who sang songs derisive of the effeminacy and cowardice of the proconsul. After this pretended parade of his prisoner through the streets of the town, Surenas called a meeting of the Seleucian senate, and indignantly denounced to them the indecency of the literature which he had found in the Roman tents. The charge, it is said, was true;[1] but the Seleucians were not greatly impressed by the moral lesson read to them, when they remarked the train of concubines that had accompanied Surenas himself in the field, and thought of the loose crowd of dancers, singers, and prostitutes, that was commonly to be seen in the rear of a Parthian army.

The political consequences of the great triumph which the Parthians had achieved were less than might have been anticipated. Mesopotamia was, of course, recovered to its extremest limit, the Euphrates; Armenia was lost to the Roman alliance, and thrown for the time into complete dependence upon Parthia. The whole East was, to some extent, excited; and the Jews, always impatient of a foreign yoke, and recently aggrieved by the unprovoked spoliation of their Temple

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 32. Οὗτοι ταῦτά γε καταψευσάμενος.

by Crassus, flew to arms.[1] But no general movement of the Oriental races took place. It might have been expected that the Syrians, Phœnicians, Cilicians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, and other Asiatic peoples whose proclivities were altogether Oriental, would have seized the opportunity of rising against their Western lords and driving the Romans back upon Europe. It might have been thought that Parthia at least would have assumed the offensive in force, and have made a determined effort to rid herself of neighbours who had proved so troublesome. But though the conjuncture of circumstances was most favourable, the man was wanting. Had Mithridates or Tigranes been living, or had Surenas been king of Parthia, instead of a mere general, advantage would probably have been taken of the occasion, and Rome might have suffered seriously. But Orodes seems to have been neither ambitious as a prince nor skilful as a commander; he lacked at any rate the keen and all-embracing glance which could sweep the political horizon and, comprehending the exact character of the situation, see at the same time how to make the most of it. He allowed the opportunity to slip by without putting forth his strength or making any considerable effort; and the occasion once lost never returned.

In Parthia itself one immediate result of the expedition seems to have been the ruin of Surenas. His services to his sovereign had exceeded the measure which it is safe in the East for a subject to render to the crown. The jealousy of his royal master was aroused, and he had to pay the penalty of over-much success with his life.[2] Parthia was thus left without a

[1] Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xiv. 7, § 3. | [2] Plut. *Crass.* § 33.

general of approved merit, for Sillaces, the second in command during the war with Crassus,[1] had in no way distinguished himself through the campaign. This condition of things may account for the feebleness of the efforts made in B.C. 52, to retaliate on the Romans the damage done by their invasion. A few weak bands only passed the Euphrates, and began the work of plunder and ravage, in which they were speedily disturbed by Cassius, who easily drove them back over the river.[2] The next year, however, a more determined attempt was made. Orodes sent his son, Pacorus, the young bridegroom, to win his spurs in Syria, at the head of a considerable force, and supported by the experience and authority of an officer of ripe age, named Osaces.[3] The army crossed the Euphrates unresisted, for Cassius, the governor, had with him only the broken remains of Crassus's army, consisting of about two legions, and, deeming himself too weak to meet the enemy in the open field, was content to defend the towns. The open country was consequently overrun; and a thrill of mingled alarm and excitement passed through all the Roman provinces in Asia.[4] The provinces were at the time most inadequately supplied with Roman troops,[5] through the desire of Cæsar and Pompey to maintain large armies about their own persons. The natives were for the most part disaffected, and inclined to hail the Parthians as brethren and deliverers.[6] Excepting Deiotarus of Galatia, and Ario-

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 21; Compare Dio Cass. xl. 12; Oros. vi. 13.

[2] Dio Cass. xl. 28.

[3] Ibid. Compare Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* v. 18, 20; *ad Div.* xv. 1; &c.

[4] See, on this point, the interesting despatch of Cicero to the Roman Senate (*Ep. ad Div.* xv. 1).

[5] See the complaints of Cicero in the despatch above referred to; and note that Cicero himself had for his large province not two complete legions (*Ep. ad Div.* iii. 6).

[6] Dio Cass. xl. 28, *ad fin.* Τῶν

barzanes of Cappadocia, Rome had, as Cicero (then proconsul of Cilicia) plaintively declared,[1] not a friend on the Asiatic continent. And Cappadocia was miserably weak,[2] and open to attack on the side of Armenia. Had Orodes and Artavasdes acted in concert, and had the latter, while Orodes sent his armies into Syria, poured the Armenian forces into Cappadocia and then into Cilicia (as it was expected that he would do),[3] there would have been the greatest danger to the Roman possessions. As it was, the excitement in Asia Minor was extreme. Cicero marched into Cappadocia with the bulk of the Roman troops, and summoned to his aid Deiotarus with his Galatians,[4] at the same time writing to the Roman Senate to implore reinforcements.[5] Cassius shut himself up in Antioch,[6] and allowed the Parthian cavalry to pass him by, and even to proceed beyond the bounds of Syria into Cilicia.[7] But the Parthians seem scarcely to have understood the situation of their adversaries, or to have been aware of their own advantages. Instead of spreading themselves wide, raising the natives, and leaving them to blockade the towns, while with their as yet unconquered squadrons they defied the enemy in the open country, we find them engaging in the siege and blockade of cities, for which they were wholly unfit, and confining themselves

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ὑμῶν τῇ τε Ῥωμαίων δεσποτείᾳ ἐχθομένων, καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς (i.e. τοὺς Πάρθους), εἴτε καὶ γείτονας καὶ συνήθεις σφίσιν ὄντας, ἀποκλινόντων.'

[1] Cic. *Ep. ad Div.* xv. 1.

[2] 'Cappadocia est inanis,' (Cic. l.s.c.)

[3] Cic. *Ep. ad Div.* xv. 3; *ad Att.* v. 20.

[4] *Ep. ad Div.* xv. 4.

[5] Ibid. xv. 1. 'Hoc autem tempore res sese ita habet, ut, nisi exercitum tantum quantum ad maximum bellum mittere voletis, mature in has provincias miseritis, summum periculum sit, ne amittendæ sint omnes hæ provinciæ.'

[6] Dio Cass. xl. 29; Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* v. 20.

[7] Cicero tells us that his cavalry defeated a Parthian detachment within the limits of Cilicia (*Ep. ad Div.* xv. 4).

almost entirely to the narrow valley of the Orontes.[1] Under these circumstances we are not surprised to learn that Cassius, having first beat them back from Antioch,[2] contrived to lead them into an ambush on the banks of the river, and severely handled their troops, even killing the general Osaces.[3] The Parthians withdrew from the neighbourhood of the Syrian capital after this defeat, which must have taken place about the end of September, and soon afterwards went into winter quarters in Cyrrhestica,[4] or the part of Syria immediately east of Amanus. Here they remained during the winter months under Pacorus, and it was expected that the war would break out again with fresh fury in the spring;[5] but Bibulus, the new proconsul of Syria, conscious of his military deficiencies, contrived to sow dissensions among the Parthians themselves, and to turn the thoughts of Pacorus in another direction. He suggested to Ornodapantes, a Parthian noble, with whom he had managed to open a correspondence, that Pacorus would be a more worthy occupant of the Parthian throne than his father, and that he would consult well for his own interests, if he were to proclaim the young prince, and lead the army of Syria against Orodes.[6] These intrigues seem to have first caused the war to languish, and then produced the recall of the expedition. Orodes summoned Pacorus to return to Parthia before the plot contrived between him and the Romans was ripe for execution; and Pacorus felt that no course was open to him but to obey.[7] The Parthian legions

[1] Dio Cass. xl. 29.

[2] Ibid. Κάσσιος ἰσχυρῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπεκρούσατο.

[3] Ibid. Compare Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* v. 20; *ad Div.* ii. 10.

[4] Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* v. 21; vi. 1.

[5] Cic. *Ep. ad Att.* v. 21: 'Maximum bellum impendet.' Compare *ad Att.* vi. 1 (p. 91*a*); *ad Div.* ii. 10.

[6] Dio Cass. xl. 30.

[7] Justin, xlii. 4, § 5. The *time* of the recall is misplaced by Justin, but the fact may be accepted on his authority.

recrossed the Euphrates in July, B.C. 50; and the First Roman War, which had lasted a little more than four years, terminated without any real recovery by the Romans of the laurels that they had lost at Carrhæ.

CHAPTER XII.

Relations of Orodes with Pompey, and with Brutus and Cassius. Second War with Rome. Great Parthian Expedition against Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor. Defeat of Saxa. Occupation of Antioch and Jerusalem. Parthians driven out of Syria by Ventidius. Death of Pacorus. Death of Orodes.

'Jam bis Monæses et Pacori manus
Non auspicatos contudit impetus
Nostros, et adjecisse prædam
Torquibus exiguis renidet.'—Hor. *Od.* iii. 6, 10–13.

The civil troubles that had seemed to threaten Parthia from the ambition of the youthful Pacorus passed away without any explosion. The son showed his obedience by returning home submissively when he might have flown to arms; and the father accepted the act of obedience as a sufficient indication that no rebellion had been seriously meant. We find Pacorus not only allowed to live, but again entrusted a few years later with high office by the Parthian monarch;[1] and on this occasion we find him showing no signs of disaffection or discontent.

Nine years, however, elapsed between the recall of the young prince and his reappointment to the supreme command against the Romans. Of the internal condition of Parthia during this interval we have no account. Apparently, Orodes ruled quietly and peaceably, con-

[1] See below, p. 187. It appears from several coins of Orodes, which bear the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΠΑΚΟΡΟΥ, that Pacorus was associated by his father in the government during the later years of his reign. Hence he is correctly called 'king' by Livy (*Epit.* cxxviii.), Justin (xlii. 4, § 10), and Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 9). See upon these coins Lindsay, *History and Coinage of the Parthians*, pp. 147, 148, and compare Pl. 3, nos. 49 and 50.

tenting himself with the glory which he had gained, and not anxious to tempt fortune by engaging in any fresh enterprise. It was no doubt a satisfaction to him to see the arms of the Romans, instead of being directed upon Asia, employed in intestine strife; and we can well understand that he might even deem it for his interest to foment and encourage the quarrels which, at any rate for the time, secured his own empire from attack. It appears that communications took place in the year B.C. 49 or 48, between him and Pompey, a request for alliance being made by the latter, and an answer being sent by Orodes, containing the terms upon which he would consent to give Pompey effective aid in the war.[1] If the Roman leader would deliver into his hands the province of Syria and make it wholly over to the Parthians, Orodes would conclude an alliance with him and send help; but not otherwise. It is to the credit of Pompey that he rejected these terms, and declined to secure his own private gain by depriving his country of a province. Notwithstanding the failure of these negotiations and the imprisonment of his envoy Hirrus,[2] when a few months later, having lost the battle of Pharsalia, the unhappy Roman was in need of a refuge from his great enemy, he is said to have proposed throwing himself on the friendship, or mercy, of Orodes.[3] He had hopes, perhaps, of enlisting the Parthian battalions in his cause, and of recovering power by means of this foreign aid. But his friends combated his design, and persuaded him that the risk, both to himself and to his wife, Cornelia, was too

[1] Dio Cass. xli. 55. Compare Justin, xlii. 4, § 6 (which, however, is an over-statement) and Cæs. *Bell. Civ.* iii. 82.

[2] Dio Cass. xlii. 2.

[3] Plut. *Pomp.* § 76; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* ii. p. 480, A; Vell. Pat. ii. 53. Dio questions the truth of the report. (l.s.c.)

great to be compatible with prudence. Pompey yielded to their representations; and Orodes escaped the difficulty of having to elect between repulsing a suppliant, and provoking the hostility of the most powerful chieftain and the greatest general of the age.

Cæsar quitted the East, in B.C. 47, without entering into any communication with Orodes. He had plenty of work upon his hands; and whatever designs he may have even then entertained of punishing the Parthian inroad into Syria, or avenging the defeat of Carrhæ,[1] he was wise enough to keep his projects to himself, and to leave Asia without exasperating by threats or hostile movements the Power on which the peace of the East principally depended. It was not until he had brought the African and Spanish wars to an end that he allowed his intention of leading an expedition against Parthia to be openly talked about. In B.C. 44, four years after Pharsalia, having put down all his domestic enemies, and arranged matters, as he thought, satisfactorily at Rome, he let a decree be passed, formally assigning to him 'the Parthian War,'[2] and sent the legions across the Adriatic on their way to Asia. What plan of campaign he may have contemplated is uncertain;[3] but there cannot be a doubt that an expedition under his auspices would have been a most serious danger to Parthia, and might have terminated in her subjection. The military talents of the Great Dictator were of the

[1] The design is attributed to him at this time by Dio, or rather by Antony, as reported by Dio (xliv. 46).

[2] Dio Cass. xliii. 51.

[3] Suetonius represents him as intending to enter Parthia by way of the Lesser Armenia, and to proceed cautiously to try the strength of the Parthians before engaging them in a battle (*Jul.* § 44). Plutarch says that he meant, after conquering the Parthians, to proceed by the Caspian and the Caucasus into Scythia, from Scythia to assail the Germans, and when he had overrun Germany, to return into Italy by way of Gaul (*Jul.* § 58).

most splendid description; his powers of organisation and consolidation enormous; his prudence and caution equal to his ambition and his courage. Once launched on a career of conquest in the East, it is impossible to say whither he might not have carried the Roman eagles, or what countries he might not have added to the Empire. But Parthia was saved from the imminent peril without any effort of her own. The daggers of 'the Liberators' struck down on the 15th of March, B.C. 44, the only man whom she had seriously to fear; and with the removal of Julius passed away even from Roman thought for many a year[1] the design which he had entertained, and which he alone could have accomplished.

In the civil war that followed on the murder of Julius, the Parthians are declared to have actually taken a part. It appears that—about B.C. 46—a small body of Parthian horse-archers had been sent to the assistance of a certain Bassus,[2] a Roman who amid the troubles of the times was seeking to obtain for himself something like an independent principality in Syria. The soldiers of Bassus, after a while (B.C. 43), went over in a body to Cassius, who was in the East collecting troops for his great struggle with Antony and Octavian; and thus a handful of Parthians came into his power.[3] Of this circumstance he determined to take advantage, in order to obtain, if possible, a considerable body of troops from Orodes. He presented each of the Parthian soldiers with a sum of money, and dismissed them all to their homes, at the same

[1] No attempt was made seriously to curtail the Parthian power, much less to conquer the Parthian State, until the time of Trajan (A.D. 115), a hundred and sixty years later. Antony's invasion was a mere ostentatious raid without serious object.

[2] Dio Cass. xlvii. 27.

[3] Appian, *Bell. Civ.* iv. pp. 623, 624.

time seizing the opportunity to send some of his own officers, as ambassadors, to Orodes, with a request for substantial aid.[1] On receiving this application the Parthian monarch appears to have come to the conclusion that it was for his interest to comply with it. Whether he made conditions, or no, is uncertain; but he seems to have sent a pretty numerous body of horse to the support of the 'Liberators' against their antagonists.[2] Perhaps he trusted to obtain from the gratitude of Cassius what he had failed to extort from the fears of Pompey. Or, perhaps, he was only anxious to prolong the period of civil disturbance in the Roman State, which secured his own territory from attack, and might ultimately give him an opportunity of helping himself to some portion of the Roman dominions in Asia.

The opportunity seemed to him to have arrived in B.C. 40. Philippi had been fought and lost. The 'Liberators' were crushed. The struggle between the Republicans and the Monarchists had come to an end. But, instead of being united, the Roman world was more than ever divided; and the chance of making an actual territorial gain at the expense of the tyrant power appeared fairer than it had ever been before. Three rivals now held divided sway in the Roman State;[3] each of them jealous of the other two, and anxious for his own aggrandisement. The two chief pretenders to the first place were bitterly hostile; and while the one was detained in Italy by insurrec-

[1] Appian, *Bell. Civ.* iv. p. 625, D, E.

[2] The authorities are not altogether agreed on this point. Dio says (xlviii. 24) that Orodes temporised, and neither refused the overtures of Cassius nor accepted them. But Justin distinctly states that the Parthians helped Brutus and Cassius (xlii. 4, § 7), and Appian mentions them thrice among the troops who fought at Philippi (*Bell. Civ.* p. 640, C, D).

[3] Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus. There was also a fourth, Sext. Pom-

tion against his authority, the other was plunged in luxury and dissipation, enjoying the first delights of a lawless passion, at the Egyptian capital. The nations of the East were, moreover, alienated by the recent exactions of the profligate Triumvir,[1] who, to reward his parasites and favourites, had laid upon them a burthen that they were scarcely able to bear. Further, the Parthians enjoyed at this time the advantage of having a Roman officer of good position in their service,[2] whose knowledge of the Roman tactics, and influence in Roman provinces, might be expected to turn to their advantage. Under these circumstances, when the spring of the year arrived, Antony being still in Egypt, and Octavian (as far as was known) occupied in the siege of Perusia,[3] the Parthian hordes, under Labienus and Pacorus, burst upon Syria in greater force than on any previous occasion. Overrunning with their numerous cavalry the country between the Euphrates and Antioch, and thence the valley of the Orontes, they had (as usual) some difficulty with the towns. From Apamæa, placed (like Durham) on a rocky peninsula almost surrounded by the river,[4] they were at first repulsed;[5] but, having shortly afterwards defeated Decidius Saxa, the governor of Syria, in the open field, they received the submission of Apamæa and Antioch, which latter city Saxa abandoned at their approach, flying precipitately into

peius, who forced himself into partnership with the other three a little later.

[1] Appian, *Bell. Civ.* v. p. 674.

[2] Q. Labienus, the son of Titus, Cæsar's legate in Gaul, had been sent as envoy to Orodes by Brutus and Cassius (Dio Cass. xlviii. 24), and was at the Parthian Court when news of the defeat at Philippi arrived. Dreading the 'proscription' of the victors, he determined to continue with the Parthians, and to put his services at their disposal.

[3] Perusia was taken in January, B.C. 40; but the news of its capture would not reach Ctesiphon for some months.

[4] Strab. xvi. 2, § 10.

[5] Dio Cass. xlviii. 25 (§ 108).

Cilicia.[1] Encouraged by these successes, Labienus and Pacorus agreed to divide their troops, and to engage simultaneously in two great expeditions. Pacorus undertook to carry the Parthian standard throughout the entire extent of Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine, while Labienus determined to invade Asia Minor, and to see if he could not wrest some of its more fertile regions from the Romans. Both expeditions were crowned with success. Pacorus reduced all Syria, and all Phœnicia, except the single city of Tyre, which he was unable to capture for want of a naval force.[2] He then advanced into Palestine, which he found in its normal condition of intestine commotion.[3] Hyrcanus and Antigonus, two princes of the Asmonæan house, were rivals for the Jewish crown; and the latter, whom Hyrcanus had expelled, was content to make common cause with the invader, and to be indebted to a rude foreigner for the possession of the kingdom whereto he aspired. He offered Pacorus a thousand talents, *and five hundred Jewish women*, if he would espouse his cause and seat him upon his uncle's throne.[4] The offer was readily embraced, and by the irresistible help of the Parthians a revolution was effected at Jerusalem. Hyrcanus was deposed and mutilated. A new priest-king was set up in the person of Antigonus, the last Asmonæan prince, who held the capital for three years—B.C. 40–37—as a Parthian satrap, the creature and dependant of the great monarchy on the further side of the Euphrates. Meanwhile in Asia Minor Labienus carried all before him. Decidius Saxa, having once more (in Cilicia)

[1] Dio Cass. xlviii. § 108–110.
[2] Ibid. xlviii. 26 (§ 111). Compare Appian, *Bell. Civ.* v. p. 701, B.
[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xiv. 13; *Bell. Jud.* i. 13.
[4] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* i. 13, § 1.

ventured upon a battle, was not only defeated, but slain.[1] Pamphylia, Lycia, and Caria were overrun. Stratonicea was besieged; Mylasa and Alabanda were taken.[2] According to some writers, the Parthians even pillaged Lydia and Ionia, and were in possession of Asia to the shores of the Hellespont.[3] It may be said that for a full year Western Asia changed masters; the rule and authority of Rome disappeared; and the Parthians were recognised as the dominant power.

But the fortune of war now began to turn. In the autumn of B.C. 39, Antony, having set out from Italy to resume his command in the East, despatched his lieutenant, Publius Ventidius, into Asia, with orders to act against Labienus and the triumphant Parthians.[4] Ventidius landed unexpectedly on the coast of Asia Minor, and so alarmed Labienus, who had no Parthian troops with him, that the latter fell back hurriedly towards Cilicia, evacuating all the more western provinces, and at the same time sending urgent messages to Pacorus to implore succour. Pacorus sent a body of horse to his aid; but these troops, instead of putting themselves under his command, acted independently, and, in a rash attempt to surprise the Roman camp, were defeated by Ventidius, whereupon they fled hastily into Cilicia, leaving Labienus to his fate.[5] The self-styled 'Imperator,'[6] upon this, deserted his men,

[1] Dio Cass. xlviii. 25, *ad fin.*

[2] Ibid. xlviii. 26. Compare Strab. xiv. 2, § 24.

[3] Plut. *Anton.* § 30; Appian, *Parth.* p. 156, *A.*

[4] Dio Cass. xlviii. 39; Plut. *Anton.* § 33.

[5] Dio Cass. xlviii. 40.

[6] Labienus styled himself 'Imperator Parthicus' (Strab. l.s.c.; Dio Cass. xlviii. 26, *ad fin.*); and even put this ridiculous title upon his coins—

Coin of Labienus.

and sought safety in flight; but his retreat was soon discovered, and he was pursued, captured, and put to death.[1]

The Parthians, meanwhile, alarmed at the turn which affairs had taken, left Antigonus to maintain their interests in Palestine, and concentrated themselves in Northern Syria and Commagêné, where they awaited the advance of the Romans. A strong detachment, under Pharnapates, was appointed to guard the Syrian Gates, or narrow pass over Mount Amanus, leading from Cilicia into Syria.[2] Here Ventidius gained another victory. He had sent forward an officer named Pompædius Silo with some cavalry, to endeavour to seize this post, and Pompædius had found himself compelled to an engagement with Pharnapates, in which he was on the point of suffering defeat, when Ventidius himself, who had probably feared for his subordinate's safety, appeared on the scene, and turned the scale in favour of the Romans. The detachment under Pharnapates was overpowered, and Pharnapates himself was among the slain.[3] When news of this defeat reached Pacorus, he resolved to retreat, and withdrew his troops across the Euphrates. This movement he appears to have executed without being molested by Ventidius, who thus recovered Syria to the Romans towards the close of B.C. 39, or early in B.C. 38.

But Pacorus was far from intending to relinquish the contest. He had made himself popular among the Syrians by his mild and just administration,[4] and knew

[1] Dio Cass. xlviii. 40, *ad fin.*; Plut. *Anton.* § 33.

[2] For the position of this pass, see Strabo, xv. 2, § 8.

[3] Dio Cass. xlviii. 41; Plut. l.s.c.; Strab. l.s.c.

[4] Dio Cass. xlix. 20. Τὸν Πάκορον ὅμοια τοῖς μάλιστα τῶν πώποτε βασιλευσάντων καὶ ἐπὶ δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ἐπὶ πραότητι [οἱ Σύροι] ὑπερηγάπων.

that they preferred his government to that of the Romans. He had many allies among the petty princes and dynasts,[1] who occupied a semi-independent position on the borders of the Parthian and Roman empires. Antigonus, whom he had established as king of the Jews, still maintained himself in Judæa against the efforts of Herod,[2] to whom Augustus and Antony had assigned the throne. Pacorus therefore arranged during the remainder of the winter for a fresh invasion of Syria in the spring, and, taking the field earlier than his adversary expected, made ready to recross the Euphrates. We are told that if he had crossed at the usual point, he would have found the Romans unprepared, the legions being still in their winter quarters, some north and some south of the range of Taurus.[3] Ventidius however contrived by a stratagem to induce him to effect the passage at a different point, considerably lower down the stream, and in this way to waste some valuable time, which he himself employed in collecting his scattered forces. Thus, when the Parthians appeared on the right bank of the Euphrates, the Roman general was prepared to engage them, and was not even loth to decide the fate of the war by a single battle. He had taken care to provide himself with a strong force of slingers, and had entrenched himself in a position on high ground at some distance from the river.[4] The Parthians, finding their passage of the Euphrates unopposed, and, when they fell in with the enemy, seeing him entrenched, as though resolved to

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[1] As Antiochus, king of Commagênê; Lysanias, tetrarch of Ituræa; Malchus, sheikh of the Nabatæan Arabs; Chavnæus, Antigonus, and others. (Dio Cass. xlviii. 41; xlix. 19, 32, &c.)

[2] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xiv. 15; *Bell. Jud.* i. 15, 16.

[3] Dio Cass. xlix. 19.

[4] Ibid. 20.

act only on the defensive, became overbold; they thought the force opposed to them must be weak or cowardly, and might yield its position without a blow, if briskly attacked. Accordingly, as on a former occasion,[1] they charged up the hill on which the Roman camp was placed, hoping to take it by sheer audacity. But the troops inside were held ready, and at the proper moment issued forth; the assailants found themselves in their turn assailed, and, fighting at a disadvantage on the slope, were soon driven down the declivity. The battle was renewed in the plain below, where the mailed horse of the Parthians made a brave resistance; but the slingers galled them severely, and in the midst of the struggle it happened that by ill-fortune Pacorus was slain. The result followed which is almost invariable with an Oriental army: having lost their leader, the soldiers everywhere gave way; flight became universal, and the Romans gained a complete victory.[2] The Parthian army fled in two directions. Part made for the bridge of boats by which it had crossed the Euphrates, but was intercepted by the Romans and destroyed. Part turned northwards into Commagêné, and there took refuge with the king, Antiochus, who refused to surrender them to the demand of Ventidius, and no doubt allowed them to return to their own country.

Thus ended the great Parthian invasion of Syria, and with it ended the prospect of any further spread of the Arsacid dominion towards the west. When the two great powers, Rome and Parthia, first came into collision—when the first blow struck by the latter, the

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[1] See above, p. 166.

[2] In describing this battle, I have followed Dio's account (xlix. 20), rather than Justin's (xlii. 4), as at once more graphic and more probable.

destruction of the army of Crassus, was followed up by the advance of their clouds of horse into Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor—when Apamæa, Antioch, and Jerusalem fell into their hands, when Decidius Saxa was defeated and slain, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Caria, Lydia, and Ionia occupied—it seemed as if Rome had found, not so much an equal, as a superior; it looked as if the power heretofore predominant would be compelled to contract her frontier, and as if Parthia would advance hers to the Egean or the Mediterranean. The history of the contest between the East and the West, between Asia and Europe, is a history of reactions. At one time one of the continents, at another time the other, is in the ascendant. The time appeared to have come when the Asiatics were once more to recover their own, and to beat back the European aggressor to his proper shores and islands. The triumphs achieved by the Seljukian Turks between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries would in that case have been anticipated by above a thousand years through the efforts of a kindred, and not dissimilar people.[1] But it turned out that the effort made was premature. While the Parthian warfare was admirably adapted for the national defence on the broad plains of inner Asia, it was ill suited for conquest, and, comparatively speaking, ineffective in more contracted and difficult regions. The Parthian military system had not the elasticity of the Roman—it did not in the same way adapt itself to circumstances, or admit of the addition of new arms, or the indefinite expansion of an old one. However loose and seemingly flexible, it was rigid in its uniformity; it never altered; it remained under the

[1] *Supra*, p. 25.

thirtieth Arsaces such as it had been under the first, improved in details, perhaps, but essentially the same system. The Romans, on the contrary, were ever modifying their system, ever learning new combinations or new manœuvres or new modes of warfare from their enemies. They met the Parthian tactics of loose array, continuous distant missiles, and almost exclusive employment of cavalry, with an increase in the number of their own horse, a larger employment of auxiliary irregulars, and a greater use of the sling.[1] At the same time, they learnt to take full advantage of the Parthian inefficiency against walls, and to practise against them the arts of pretended retreat and ambush. The result was, that Parthia found she could make no impression upon the dominions of Rome, and having become persuaded of this by the experience of a decade of years, thenceforth laid aside for ever the idea of attempting Western conquests. She took up, in fact, from this time, a new attitude. Hitherto she had been consistently aggressive. She had laboured constantly to extend herself at the expense successively of the Bactrians, the Scythians, the Syro-Macedonians, and the Armenians. She had proceeded from one aggression to another, leaving only short intervals between her wars, and had always been looking out for some fresh enemy. Henceforth she became, comparatively speaking, pacific. She was content, for the most part, to maintain her limits. She sought no new foe. Her contest with Rome degenerated into a struggle for

[1] Compare on this point Dio Cass. xlix. 20, and 26, with Plut. *Anton.* § 41. Note especially the statement of Dio:—οἱ σφενδονῆται, πολλοί τε ὄντες, καὶ μακροτέρῳ τῶν τόξων ἱέντες, πάντα καὶ τὸν κατάφρακτον ἰσχυρῶς ἐλυμαίνοντο—and the fact implied in Plutarch that the slingers used leaden bullets (μολυβδεῖς) instead of stones.

influence over the kingdom of Armenia; and her hopes were limited to the reduction of that kingdom into a subject position.

The death of Pacorus is said to have caused Orodes intense grief.[1] For many days he would neither eat nor speak; then his sorrow took another turn. He imagined that his son had returned; he thought continually that he heard or saw him; he could do nothing but repeat his name. Every now and then, however, he awoke to a sense of the actual fact, and mourned the death of his favourite with tears. After a while this extreme grief wore itself out, and the aged king began to direct his attention once more to public affairs. He grew anxious about the succession.[2] Of the thirty sons who still remained to him there was not one who had made himself a name, or was in any way distinguished above the remainder. In the absence of any personal ground of preference, Orodes—who seems to have regarded himself as possessing a right to nominate the son who should succeed him—thought the claims of primogeniture deserved to be considered, and selected as his successor Phraates, the eldest of the thirty.[3] Not content with nominating him, or perhaps doubtful whether the nomination would be accepted by the Megistanes, he proceeded further to abdicate in his favour, whereupon Phraates became king. The transaction proved a most unhappy one. Phraates, jealous of some of his brothers, who were the sons of a princess married to Orodes,[4] whereas his own mother was only a concubine, removed them by assassination,

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[1] Justin, xlii. 4, §§ 12–13. Compare Dio Cass. xlix. 23.
[2] Justin, xlii. 4, § 14.
[3] Dio Cass. xlix. 23.
[4] Orodes had married a daughter of Antiochus, king of Commagêné (Dio Cass. l.s.c.)

and when the ex-monarch ventured to express disapproval of the act, added the crime of parricide to fratricide by putting to death his aged father.[1] Thus perished Orodes, after a reign of eighteen years—the most memorable in the Parthian annals.

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[1] According to Plutarch (*Crass.* § 33) Phraates first attempted his father's destruction by means of poison, but the poison failing to take effect, he then smothered him with his pillow.

CHAPTER XIII.

Reign of Phraates IV. His cruelties. Flight of Monæses to Antony. Antony's great Parthian Expedition, or Invasion of Media Atropatêné. Its Complete Failure. Subsequent Alliance of the Median King with Antony. War between Parthia and Media. Rebellion raised against Phraates by Tiridates. Phraates expelled. He recovers his Throne with the help of the Scythians. His dealings with Augustus. His Death and Character.

'Redditum Cyri solio Phraatem
Dissidens plebi numero beatorum
Eximit Virtus.'—Hor. *Od.* ii. 2, 16–18.

The shedding of blood is like 'the letting out of water.' When it once begins, none can say where it will stop. The absolute monarch who, for his own fancied security, commences a system of executions, is led on step by step to wholesale atrocities from which he would have shrunk with horror at the outset. Phraates had removed brothers whose superior advantages of birth made them formidable rivals. He had punished with death a father who ventured to blame his act, and to forget that by abdication he had sunk himself to the position of a subject. Could he have stopped here, it might have seemed that his severities proceeded not so much from cruelty of disposition as from political necessity; and historians, always tender in the judgments which they pass on kings under such circumstances, would probably have condoned or justified his conduct. But the taste for bloodshed grows with the indulgence of it. In a short time, the young

king had killed all his remaining brothers,[1] although their birth was no better than his own, and there was no valid ground for his fearing them; and soon afterwards, not content with the murder of his own relations, he began to vent his fury upon the Parthian nobles. Many of these suffered death;[2] and such a panic seized the order, that numbers quitted the country, and dispersed in different directions, content to remain in exile until the danger which threatened them should have passed by. There were others, however, who were not so patient. A body of chiefs had fled to Antony, among whom was a certain Monæses, a nobleman of the highest rank,[3] who seems to have distinguished himself previously in the Syrian wars.[4] This person represented to Antony that Phraates had by his tyrannical and bloody conduct made himself hateful to his subjects, and that a revolution could easily be effected. If the Romans would support him, he offered to invade Parthia; and he made no doubt of wresting the greater portion of it from the hands of the tyrant, and of being himself accepted as king. In that case, he would consent to hold his crown of the Romans, who might depend upon his fidelity and gratitude. Antony is said to have listened to these overtures, and to have been induced by them to turn his thoughts to an invasion of the Parthian kingdom.[5] He began to collect troops and to obtain allies with this object. He entered into negotiations with Artavasdes, the Armenian king,[6]

[1] To reconcile Dio (xlix. 23) with Justin (xlii. 4, § 14), it is necessary to suppose that the grandsons of Antiochus were murdered first, the sons of Orodes by his concubines afterwards.

[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[3] Plut. *Anton.* § 37. Ἀνὴρ ἐπιφανὴς καὶ δυνατός.

[4] Hor. *Od.* iii. 6. 9.

[5] Dio Cass. xlix. 24.

[6] Ibid. c. 25.

who seems at this time to have been more afraid of Rome than of Parthia, and engaged him to take a part in his projected campaign. He spoke of employing Monæses in a separate expedition. Under these circumstances, Phraates became alarmed. He sent a message to Monæses, with promises of pardon and favour, which that chief thought worthy of acceptance. Hereupon Monæses represented to Antony that by a peaceful return he might perhaps do him as much service as by having recourse to arms; and though Antony was not persuaded, he thought it prudent to profess himself well satisfied, and to allow Monæses to quit him. His relations with Parthia, he said, might perhaps be placed on a proper footing without a war, and he was quite willing to try negotiation. His ambassadors should accompany Monæses. They would be instructed to demand nothing of Phraates but the restoration of the Roman standards taken from Crassus, and the liberation of such of the captive soldiers as were still living.[1]

But Antony had really determined on war. It may be doubted whether it had required the overtures of Monæses to put a Parthian expedition into his thoughts. He must have been either more or less than a man if the successes of his lieutenants had not stirred in his mind some feeling of jealousy, and some desire to throw their victories into the shade by a grand and notable achievement. Especially the glory of Ventidius, who had been allowed the much-coveted honour of a triumph at Rome on account of his defeats of the Parthians in Cilicia and Syria,[2] must have moved him

[1] Dio Cass. xlix. 24, *ad fin.*

[2] The 'Fasti triumphales' give under the year A.U.C. 715 (=B.C. 38) the entry 'P. VENTIDIVS PRO COS. EX TAVRO MONTE ET PARTHEIS.'

to emulation, and have caused him to cast about for some means of exalting his own military reputation above that of his subordinates. For this purpose, nothing, he must have known, would be so effectual as a real Parthian success, the inflicting on this hated and dreaded foe of an unmistakable humiliation, the dictating to them terms of peace on their own soil after some crushing and overwhelming disaster. And, after the victories of Ventidius, this did not appear to be so very difficult. The prestige of the Parthian name was gone. Roman soldiers could be trusted to meet them without alarm, and to contend with them without undue excitement or flurry. The weakness, as well as the strength, of their military system had come to be known; and expedients had been devised by which its strong points were met and counterbalanced.[1] At the head of sixteen legions,[2] Antony might well think that he could invade Parthia successfully, and not only avoid the fate of Crassus, but gather laurels which might serve him in good stead in his contest with his great political rival.

Nor can the Roman general be taxed with undue precipitation, or with attacking in insufficient force. He had begun, as already noticed, with securing the co-operation of the Armenian king, Artavasdes, who promised him a contingent of 7,000 foot and 6,000 horse. His Roman infantry is estimated at 60,000; besides which he had 10,000 Gallic and Iberian horse, and 30,000 light armed and cavalry of the Asiatic allies.[3] His own army thus amounted to 100,000

[1] See above, p. 194.

[2] So Florus (iv. 10) and Justin (xlii. 5, § 3). Livy says eighteen (Epit. cxxx.); Velleius (ii. 82, § 1), thirteen.

[3] These numbers are taken from Plutarch (*Anton.* § 37), whose account is the most circumstantial, and (on the whole) the one most to be depended upon.

men; and, with the Armenian contingent, his entire force would have been 113,000. It seems that it was his original intention to cross the Euphrates into Mesopotamia, and thus to advance almost in the footsteps of Crassus;[1] but, when he reached the banks of the river (about midsummer, B.C. 37), he found such preparations made to resist him, that he abandoned his first design, and, turning northwards, entered Armenia, determined to take advantage of his alliance with Artavasdes, and to attack Parthia with Armenia as the basis of his operations. Artavasdes gladly received him, and persuaded him, instead of penetrating into Parthia itself, to direct his arms against the territory of a Parthian subject-ally,[2] the king of Media Atropatêné, whose territories adjoined Armenia on the south-east. Artavasdes pointed out that the Median monarch was absent from his own country, having joined his troops to those which Phraates had collected for the defence of Parthia. His territory therefore would be open to ravage, and even Praaspa, his capital, might prove an easy prey. The prospect excited Antony, who at once divided his troops, and having given orders to Oppius Statianus to follow him leisurely with the more unwieldy part of the army, the baggage-train, and the siege batteries, proceeded himself by forced marches to Praaspa with all the cavalry and the infantry of the better class.[3] This town was situated at the distance of nearly three hundred miles from the Armenian frontier;[4] but the

[1] Dio Cass. xlix. 25.

[2] Media Atropatêné was sometimes subject to Parthia, sometimes independent. That at this time it was dependent appears from the whole narrative of the war in Plutarch and Dio.

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[4] See below, p. 204. On the identity of Dio's Praaspa (the Vera of Strabo, xi. 13, § 3) with the modern Takht-i-Suleïman, see a paper by Sir H. Rawlinson in the *Geographical Journal*, vol. x. p. 113–117.

way to it lay through well-cultivated plains, where food and water were abundant. Antony performed the march without difficulty, and at once invested the place. The walls were strong, and the defenders numerous, so that he made little impression; and when the Median king returned, accompanied by his Parthian suzerain, to the defence of his country, the capital seemed in so little danger that it was resolved to direct the first attack on Statianus, who had not yet joined his chief. A most successful onslaught was made on this officer, who was surprised, defeated, and slain.[1] Ten thousand Romans fell in the battle,[2] and all the baggage-wagons and engines of war were taken. A still worse result of the defeat was the desertion of Artavasdes, who, regarding the case of the Romans as desperate, drew off his troops, and left Antony to his own resources.[3]

The Roman general now found himself in great difficulties. He had exhausted the immediate neighbourhood of Praaspa, and was obliged to send his foraging-parties on distant expeditions, where, being beyond the reach of his protection, they were attacked and cut to pieces by the enemy.[4] He had lost his siege-train, and found it impossible to construct another. Such works as he attempted suffered through the sallies of the besieged; and in some of these his soldiers behaved so ill that he was forced to punish their cowardice by decimation.[5] His supplies failed, and he had to feed his troops on barley instead of wheat. Meantime the autumnal equinox was approaching, and the weather

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[1] Plut. *Anton.* § 38, *ad fin.*; Dio Cass. xlix. 25.

[2] So Plutarch (l.s.c.). The 'two legions' of Livy ('duabus legionibus amissis,' *Epit.* cxxx.) seem to refer to this battle. Compare Vell. Pat. ii. 82, § 2.

[3] Plut. *Anton.* § 39.

[4] Dio Cass. xlix. 26.

[5] Plut. *Anton.* § 39, *ad fin.*; Dio Cass. xlix. 27.

was becoming cold. The Medes and Parthians, under their respective monarchs, hung about him, impeded his movements, and cut off his stragglers, but carefully avoided engaging him in a pitched battle. If he could have forced the city to a surrender, he would have been in comparative safety, for he might have gone into winter quarters there and have renewed the war in the ensuing spring. But all his assaults, with whatever desperation they were made, failed; and it became necessary to relinquish the siege and retire into Armenia before the rigours of winter should set in. He could however with difficulty bring himself to make a confession of failure, and flattered himself for a while that the Parthians would consent to purchase his retirement by the surrender of the Crassian captives and standards. Having lost some valuable time in negotiations, at which the Parthians laughed,[1] at length, when the equinox was passed, he broke up from before Praaspa, and commenced the work of retreat. There were two roads[2] by which he might reach the Araxes at the usual point of passage. One lay towards the left, through a plain and open country,[3] probably that through which he had come; the other, which was shorter, but more difficult, lay to the right, leading across a mountain-tract, but one fairly supplied with water, and in which there were inhabited villages. Antony was advised that the Parthians had occupied the easier route,[4] expecting that he would follow it,

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[1] Dio Cass. xlix. 27; Plut. *Anton.* § 40.

[2] Plut. *Anton.* § 41.

[3] If Praaspa was, as is probable, the modern Takht-i-Suleïman, this would be the route along the course of the Jaghetu and the eastern shores of Lake Urumiyeh, which is the road an army would naturally follow. (See *Geograph. Journ.* vol. x. p. 115.)

[4] Plut. l.s.c. Compare Dio Cass. xlix. 28.

and intended to overwhelm him with their cavalry in the plains. He therefore took the road to the right through a rugged and inclement country—probably that between Tahkt-i-Suleïman and Tabriz[1]—and, guided by a Mardian who knew the region well, proceeded to make his way back to the Araxes. His decision took the Parthians by surprise, and for two days he was unmolested. But by the third day they had thrown themselves across his path; and thenceforward, for nineteen consecutive days, they disputed with Antony every inch of his retreat, and inflicted on him the most serious damage. The sufferings of the Roman army during this time, says a modern historian of Rome,[2] 'were unparalleled in their military annals. The intense cold, the blinding snow and driving sleet, the want sometimes of provisions, sometimes of water, the use of poisonous herbs, and the harassing attacks of the enemy's cavalry and bowmen, which could only be repelled by maintaining the dense array of the phalanx or the tortoise, reduced the retreating army by one third of its numbers.' At length, after a march of 300 Roman, or 277 British, miles, they reached the river Araxes, probably at the Julfa ferry, and, crossing it, found themselves in Armenia. But the calamities of the return were not yet ended. Though it was arranged with Artavasdes that the bulk of the army should winter in Armenia,[3] yet, before the various detachments could reach their quarters in different parts of the country, eight thousand more had perished through the effects of past sufferings or the severity of

[1] Sir H. Rawlinson has shown that this route corresponds in every particular to that described by Plutarch. (*Geograph. Journ.* vol. x. pp. 115-117.)

[2] Merivale, *Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 289.

[3] Dio Cass. xlix. 31.

the weather.[1] Altogether, out of the hundred thousand men whom Antony led into Media Atropatêné, less than seventy thousand[2] remained to commence the campaign which was threatened for the ensuing year. Well may the unfortunate commander have exclaimed, as he compared his own heavy losses with the light ones of Xenophon and his Greeks in these same regions, 'Oh, those Ten Thousand! those Ten Thousand!'[3]

On the withdrawal of Antony into Armenia, a quarrel broke out between Phraates and his Median vassal. The latter regarded himself as wronged in the division made of the Roman spoils,[4] and expressed himself with so much freedom on the subject as to offend his suzerain. He then began to fear that he had gone too far, and that Phraates would punish him by depriving him of his sovereignty. Accordingly, he was anxious to obtain a powerful alliance, and on turning over in his mind all feasible political combinations, it seems to have occurred to him that his late enemy, Antony, might be disposed to take him under his protection. He doubtless knew that Artavasdes of Armenia had offended the Roman leader by deserting him in the hour of his greatest peril, and felt that, if Antony was intending to revenge himself on the traitor, he would be glad to have a friend on the Armenian border. He therefore sent an ambassador of rank[5] to Alexandria,

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[1] Plut. *Anton.* § 51.

[2] Florus says that not more than one-third *of the legionaries* escaped (iv. 10); Velleius, that one-fourth of the soldiers and one-third of the attendants perished (ii. 82). Plutarch estimates the loss in Media at 24,000 men (*Anton.* § 50); but it is doubtful whether he means to include in this the 10,000 destroyed with Statianus. If not, he would regard the army as reduced on its return to Armenia from 100,000 to 66,000.

[3] Plut. *Anton.* § 45, *ad fin.* Φθειρομένων δὲ πολλῶν, καὶ τῶν Πάρθων οὐκ ἀφισταμένων πολλάκις ἀναφθέγξασθαι τὸν Ἀντώνιον ἱστοροῦσιν, Ὦ μύριοι.

[4] Dio Cass. xlix. 33. Plut. *Anton.* § 52.

[5] Polemo, who is called 'king of Pontus' (Dio Cass. xlix. 23)—that

where Antony was passing the winter, and boldly proposed the alliance. Antony readily accepted it; he was intensely angered by the conduct of the Armenian monarch, and determined on punishing his defection; he viewed the Median alliance as of the utmost importance in connection with the design, which he still entertained, of invading Parthia itself;[1] and he saw in the powerful descendant of Atropates a prince whom it would be well worth his while to bind to his cause indissolubly. He therefore embraced the overtures made to him with joy, and even rewarded the messenger who had brought them with a principality.[2] After sundry efforts to entice Artavasdes into his power, which occupied him during most of B.C. 35, in the spring of B.C. 34 he suddenly appeared in Armenia. His army, which had remained there from the previous campaign, held all the more important positions, and, as he professed the most friendly feelings towards Artavasdes, even proposing an alliance between their families,[3] that prince, after some hesitation, at length ventured into his presence. He was immediately seized and put in chains.[4] Armenia was rapidly overrun. Artaxias, whom the Armenians made king in the room of his father, was defeated and forced to take refuge with the Parthians. Antony then arranged a marriage between the daughter of the Median monarch[5] and his own son by Cleopatra, Alexander, and, leaving garrisons

is, of the portion which had not been absorbed into the Roman Empire. On the history of this Polemo, see Clinton, *F. H.* vol. iii. p. 428, note *m*.

[1] Plut. *Anton.* § 52.

[2] Dio Cass. xlix. 33. Τῷ Πολέμωνι μισθὸν τῆς κηρυκείας τὴν μικροτέραν Ἀρμενίαν δοῦναι.

[3] Ibid. xlix. 39.

[4] These are said to have been at first of silver (Dio Cass. xlix. 39, *ad fin.*), and afterwards of gold (*ib.* 40; Vell. Paterc. ii. 82).

[5] This king had the same name as the Armenian monarch—viz., Artavasdes. He has, therefore, to prevent confusion, not been named in the text.

in Armenia, carried off Artavasdes and a rich booty into Egypt.

Phraates, during these transactions, stood wholly upon the defensive. It may not have been unpleasing to him to see Artavasdes punished. It must have gratified him to observe how Antony was injuring his own cause by exasperating the Armenians, and teaching them to hate Rome even more than they hated Parthia.[1] But while Antony's troops held both Syria and Armenia, and the alliance between Media Atropatêné and Rome continued, he could not venture to take any aggressive step, or do aught but protect his own frontier. He was obliged even to look on with patience, when, early in B.C. 33, Antony appeared once more in these parts,[2] and advancing to the Araxes, had a conference with the Median monarch, whereat their alliance was confirmed, troops exchanged, part of Armenia made over to the Median king, and Jotapa, his daughter, given as a bride to the young Alexander, whom Antony designed to make satrap of the East.[3] But no sooner had Antony withdrawn into Asia Minor in preparation for his contest with Octavian, than Phraates took the offensive. In combination with Artaxias, the new Armenian king, he attacked Antony's ally; but the latter repulsed him by the help of his Roman troops. Soon afterwards, however, Antony recalled these troops without restoring to the Median king his own contingent; upon which the two confederates renewed their attack, and were successful. The Median prince was defeated and taken prisoner.[4] Artaxias recovered

[1] Compare Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 3: 'Armenia inter Parthorum et Romanas opes infida *ob scelus Antonii*.'

[2] Dio Cass. xlix. 44.

[3] See Plut. *Anton.* § 54; Dio Cass. xlix. 41.

[4] Dio Cass. xlix. 44.

Armenia, and massacred all the Roman garrisons which he found in it.[1] Both countries became once more wholly independent of Rome, and it is probable that Media returned to its old allegiance.

But the successes of Phraates abroad produced ill consequences at home. Elated by his victories, and regarding his position in Parthia as thereby secured, he resumed the series of cruelties towards his subjects which the Roman war had interrupted, and pushed them so far, that an insurrection broke out against his authority (B.C. 33), and he was compelled to quit the country.[2] The revolt was headed by a certain Tiridates, who, upon its success, was made king by the insurgents. Phraates fled into Scythia, and persuaded the Scythians to embrace his cause. These nomads, nothing loth, took up arms, and without any great difficulty restored Phraates to the throne from which his people had expelled him. Tiridates fled at their approach, and, having contrived to carry off in his flight the youngest son of Phraates, presented himself before Octavian, who was in Syria at the time on his return from Egypt (B.C. 30),[3] surrendered the young prince into his hands, and requested his aid against the tyrant.[4] Octavian accepted the valuable hostage, but, with his usual caution, declined to pledge

[1] Dio Cass. li. 16.

[2] Justin, xlii. 5. § 4. It was probably now that Phraates, fearing that his seraglio would fall into the hands of Tiridates, murdered all his concubines. (Isid. Char. *M. P.* § 1.)

[3] Tiridates cannot have reigned *in Parthia* more than about three years (from B.C. 33 to 30); but he continued to claim the title of king and to issue coins till, at any rate, B.C. 26. Coins which seem rightly assigned to him in the British Museum Collection (arranged by the late Mr. De Salis) bear the dates ΕΠΣ and ϚΠΣ, or B.C. 27 and 26. The earliest coin of a similar type which is dated, bears the letters ϘΟΣ, or B.C. 33.

[4] Justin makes these events take place later, when Augustus was in Spain (B.C. 27–24); but it seems impossible that the circumstantial account of Dio (li. 18) can be a mere fiction.

himself to furnish any help to the pretender; he might remain, he said, in Syria, if he so wished, and while he continued under Roman protection, a suitable provision should be made for his support, but he must not expect armed assistance against the Parthian monarch. To that monarch, when some years afterwards (B.C. 23) he demanded the surrender of his subject and the restoration of his young son, Octavian answered,[1] that he could not give Tiridates up to him, but he would restore him his son without a ransom. He should expect, however, that in return for this kindness the Parthian king would on his part deliver to the Romans the standards taken from Crassus and Antony, together with all who survived of the Roman captives. It does not appear that Phraates was much moved by the Emperor's generosity. He gladly received his son; but he took no steps towards the restoration of those proofs of Parthian victory which the Romans were so anxious to recover. It was not until B.C. 20, when Octavian (now become Augustus) visited the East, and war seemed the probable alternative if he continued obstinate, that the Parthian monarch brought himself to relinquish the trophies which were as much prized by the victors as the vanquished.[2] In extenuation of his act we must remember that he was unpopular with his subjects, and that Augustus could at any moment have produced a pretender, who had once occupied, and with Roman help might easily have mounted for a second time, the throne of the Arsacidæ.

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[1] Dio Cass. liii. 33.

[2] The standards were surrendered to Tiberius (Suet. *Tib.* § 9), who was commissioned by Augustus to receive them. Their recovery is celebrated in jubilant chorus by the Roman writers. (Suet. *Octav.* § 21 Liv. *Epit.* cxxxix.; Vell. Pat. ii. 91; Florus, iv. 12, § 63; Justin, xlii. 5, § 11; Eutrop. vii. 5; Oros. vi. 21, *ad fin.*; Hor. *Od.* iv. 15, 6-8; Ovid. *Trist.* ii. 227, 228, &c.)

The remaining years of Phraates—and he reigned for nearly twenty years after restoring the standards—are almost unbroken by any event of importance. The result of the twenty years' struggle between Rome and Parthia had been to impress either nation with a wholesome dread of the other. Both had triumphed on their own ground; both had failed when they ventured on sending expeditions into the enemy's territory. Each now stood on its guard, watching the movements of its adversary across the Euphrates. Both had become pacific. It is a well-known fact that Augustus left it as a principle of policy to his successors that the Roman Empire had reached its proper limits, and could not with advantage be extended further.[1] This principle, followed with the utmost strictness by Tiberius, was accepted as a rule by all the earlier Cæsars, and only regarded as admitting of rare and slight exceptions. Trajan was the first who, a hundred and thirty years after the accession of Augustus, made light of it and set it at defiance. With him re-awoke the spirit of conquest, the aspiration after universal dominion. But in the meantime there was peace—peace indeed not absolutely unbroken, for border wars occurred, and Rome was tempted sometimes to interfere by arms in the internal quarrels of her neighbour[2]—but a general state of peace and amity prevailed—neither state made any grand attack on the other's dominions—no change occurred in the frontier—no great battle tested the relative strength of the two peoples. Such rivalry as remained was exhibited less in arms than in diplomacy, and showed itself mainly in endeavours on either side to obtain a predominant influence in Armenia. There

[1] See Tacit. *Ann.* i. 11, *ad fin.*; Dio Cass. lv. 33, &c.

[2] As when she assisted Meherdates against Gotarzes (*infra*, p. 256).

alone during the century and a half that intervened between Antony and Trajan did the interests of Rome and Parthia come into collision, and in connection with this kingdom alone did any struggle between the two countries continue.

Phraates, after yielding to Augustus in the matter of the standards and prisoners, appears for many years to have studiously cultivated his good graces. In the interval between B.C. 11 and B.C. 7,[1] distrustful of his subjects, and fearful of their removing him in order to place one of his sons upon the Parthian throne, he resolved to send these possible rivals out of the country; and on this occasion he paid Augustus the compliment of selecting Rome for his children's residence.[2] The youths were four in number, Vonones, Seraspadanes, Rhodaspes, and Phraates;[3] two of them were married and had children; they resided at Rome during the remainder of their father's lifetime, and were treated as became their rank, being supported at the public charge and in a magnificent manner.[4] The Roman writers speak of these as 'hostages' given by Phraates to the Roman Emperor;[5] but this was certainly not

[1] This date is fixed by the mention in Strabo (xvi. 1, § 28) of Titius as the governor of Syria at the time when the youths were sent to Rome. M. Titius ruled Syria as legate from B.C. 11 to B.C. 7.

[2] Strab. xvi. 1, § 28; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 1; Vell. Pat. ii. 94; Justin, xlii. 5, § 12.

[3] Strabo, l. s. c. The names of two of these youths appear in an inscription found at Rome and published by Gruter (*Corp. Inscr.* p. cclxxviii. 2), part of which runs thus: SERASPADANES . PHRAATIS ARSACIS . REGVM . REGIS . F PARTHVS RHODASPES . PHRAATIS ARSACIS . REGVM . REGIS . F PARTHVS

[4] Strab. l.s.c. Τῶν μὲν οὖν παίδων ὅσοι περίεισιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ δημοσίᾳ βασιλικῶς τημελοῦνται.

[5] Among the Latin writers, the idea commences with Velleius, the flatterer of Tiberius (ii. 94, *ad fin.*). From him it passes to Suetonius (*Octav.* § 21), Justin (l.s.c.), Eutropius (vii. 5), Orosius (vi. 21, *ad fin.*), &c. We find it, however, even previously to Velleius, in Strabo. The good sense of Tacitus prevents him from accepting the view.

the intention of the Parthian monarch; nor could the idea well be entertained by the Romans at the time of their residence.

These amicable relations between the two sovereigns would probably have continued undisturbed till the death of one or the other, had not a revolution occurred in Armenia, which tempted the Parthian king beyond his powers of resistance. On the death of Artaxias (B.C. 20), Augustus, who was then in the East, had sent Tiberius into Armenia to arrange matters, and Tiberius had placed upon the throne a brother of Artaxias, named Tigranes.[1] Tigranes died in B.C. 6, and the Armenians, without waiting to know the will of the Roman Emperor, conferred the royal title on his sons, for whose succession he had before his death paved the way by associating them with him in the government.[2] Enraged at this assumption of independence, Augustus sent an expedition into Armenia (B.C. 5), deposed the sons of Tigranes, and established on the throne a certain Artavasdes, whose birth and parentage are not known to us.[3] But the Armenians were not now inclined to submit to foreign dictation; they rose in revolt against Artavasdes (ab. B.C. 2), defeated his Roman supporters, and expelled him from the kingdom.[4] Another Tigranes was made king;[5] and, as it was pretty certain that the Romans would interfere with this new display of the spirit of independence, the Parthians were called in to resist the Roman oppressors. Armenia was, in fact, too weak to stand alone, and was obliged to lean upon one

[1] Tac. *Ann.* ii. 3; Suet. *Tib.* § 9; Dio Cass. liv. 9. By a strange mistake, Velleius calls the king whom Tiberius set up Artavasdes (ii. 94).

[2] Tac. *Ann.* l.s.c.

[3] Ibid. Coins of the year B.C. 5 (A.U.C. 749) have the legend ARMENIA RECEPTA.

[4] Dio Cass. lv. 9.

[5] This Tigranes is, I believe, mentioned only in a fragment of Dio (lv. 11), the exact place of which is uncertain.

or other of the two great empires upon her borders. Her people had no clear political foresight, and allowed themselves to veer and fluctuate between the two influences according as the feelings of the hour dictated. Rome had now angered them beyond their very limited powers of endurance, and they flew to Parthia for help, just as on other occasions we shall find them flying to Rome. Phraates could not bring himself to reject the Armenian overtures. Ever since the time of the second Mithridates it had been a settled maxim of Parthian policy to make Armenia dependent; and, even at the cost of a rupture with Rome, it seemed to Phraates that he must respond to the appeal made to him. The rupture might not come. Augustus was now aged, and might submit to the affront without resenting it. He had lately lost the services of his best general, Tiberius, who, indignant at slights put upon him, had gone into retirement at Rhodes. He had no one that he could employ but his grandsons, youths who had not yet fleshed their maiden swords. Phraates probably hoped that Augustus would draw back before the terrors of a Parthian war under such circumstances, and would allow without remonstrance the passing of Armenia into the position of a subject-ally of Parthia.

But, if these were his thoughts, he had miscalculated. Augustus, from the time that he heard of the Armenian troubles, and of the support given to them by Parthia, seems never to have wavered in his determination to vindicate the claims of Rome to paramount influence in Armenia, and to have only hesitated as to the person whose services he should employ in the business. He would have been glad to employ Tiberius; but that morose prince had deserted him and, declining public life, had betaken himself to Rhodes, where he was

living in a self-chosen retirement. Caius, the eldest of his grandsons, was, in B.C. 2, only eighteen years of age; and, though the thoughts of Augustus at once turned in this direction, the extreme youth of the prince caused him to hesitate somewhat; and the consequence was that Caius did not start for the East till late in B.C. 1. Meanwhile a change had occurred in Parthia. Phraates, who had filled the throne for above thirty-five years, ceased to exist,[1] and was succeeded by a young son, Phraataces, who reigned in conjunction with the queen-mother, Thermusa, or Musa.[2]

The circumstances which brought about this change were the following. Phraates IV. had married, late in life, an Italian slave-girl, sent him as a present by Augustus; and she had borne him a son for whom she was naturally anxious to secure the succession. According to some, it was under her influence that the monarch had sent his four elder boys to Rome, there to receive their education.[3] At any rate, in the absence of these youths, Phraataces, the child of the slave-girl, became the chief support of Phraates in the administration of affairs, and obtained a position in Parthia which led him to regard himself as entitled to the throne so soon as it should become vacant. Doubtful, however, of his father's goodwill, or fearful of the rival claims of his brothers, if he waited till the throne was vacated in

[1] It has been usual to regard Phraates IV. as having reigned till A.D. 4 (Heeren, *Manual*, p. 303, E.T.; Plate in Smith's *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. i. p. 357; Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, pp. 48, 49); or even till A.D. 15 (Clinton's *Fasti Romani*, vol. ii. p. 246). But the dates on the coins of Phraataces prove that he was king in B.C. 2, and there is no reason to think that he was associated by his father. The difficulty on the point has been in part owing to Dio's calling the son 'Phraates' (lv. 11) as well as the father.

[2] Joseph. (*Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4) gives the name as Thermusa; but it appears as 'Musa' (ΜΟΥΣΑ) invariably upon the coins.

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* l.s.c.

the natural course of events, Phraataces resolved to anticipate the hand of time, and, in conjunction with his mother, administered poison to the old monarch,[1] from the effects of which he died. A just Nemesis for once showed itself in that portion of human affairs which passes before our eyes. Phraates IV., the parricide and fratricide, was, after a reign of thirty-five years, himself assassinated (B.C. 2) by a wife whom he loved only too fondly and a son whom he esteemed and trusted.

Phraates cannot but be regarded as one of the ablest of the Parthian monarchs. His conduct of the campaign against Antony—one of the best soldiers that Rome ever produced—was admirable, and showed him a master of guerilla warfare. His success in maintaining himself upon the throne for five and thirty years, in spite of rivals, and notwithstanding the character which he obtained for cruelty, implies, in such a state as Parthia, considerable powers of management. His dealings with Augustus indicate much suppleness and dexterity. If he did not in the course of his long reign advance the Parthian frontier, at any rate he was not obliged to retract it. Apparently, he ceded nothing to the Scyths as the price of their assistance. He maintained the Parthian supremacy over Northern Media. He lost no inch of territory to the Romans. It was undoubtedly a prudent step on his part to soothe the irritated vanity of Rome by a surrender of useless trophies, and scarcely more useful prisoners; and, we may doubt if this concession was not as effective as the dread of the Parthian

[1] Pacorus, the eldest son of Orodes, was of age to receive a military command in B.C. 51, and must therefore have been born as early as B.C. 69 or 70. Phraates, the second son, is likely to have been but a few years younger. He would therefore be sixty-five or sixty-six in B.C. 2.

arms in producing that peace between the two countries which continued unbroken for above ninety years from the campaign of Antony,[1] and without serious interruption for yet another half century.[2] If Phraates felt, as he might well feel after the campaigns of Pacorus, that on the whole Rome was a more powerful state than Parthia, and that consequently Parthia had nothing to gain but much to lose in the contest with her western neighbour, he did well to allow no sentiment of foolish pride to stand in the way of a concession that made a prolonged peace between the two countries possible. It is sometimes more honourable to yield to a demand than to meet it with defiance; and the prince who removed a cause of war arising out of mere national vanity, while at the same time he maintained in all essential points the interests and dignity of his kingdom, deserved well of his subjects, and merits the approval of the historian. As a man, Phraates has left behind him a bad name: he was cruel, selfish, and ungrateful, a fratricide, and a parricide; but as a king he is worthy of respect, and in certain points of admiration.

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[1] From the year of the campaign of Antony (B.C. 36) to the commencement of the war between Vologeses I. and Nero (A.D. 58) was a period of ninety-four years.

[2] Till the attack of Trajan, A.D. 114, fifty-two years after the end of the war with Nero.

CHAPTER XIV.

Short Reigns of Phraataces, Orodes II., and Vonones I. Accession of Artabanus III. His relations with Germanicus and Tiberius. His War with Pharasmanes of Iberia. His First Expulsion from his Kingdom, and return to it. His Peace with Rome. Internal Troubles of the Parthian Kingdom. Second Expulsion and Return of Artabanus. His Death.

'Mota Orientis regna, provinciæque Romanæ, initio apud Parthos orto.'
Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 1.

THE accession of Phraataces made no difference in the attitude of Parthia towards Armenia. The young prince was as anxious as his father had been to maintain the Parthian claims to that country, and at first perhaps as inclined to believe that Augustus would not dispute them. Immediately upon his accession, he sent ambassadors to Rome announcing the fact, apologising for the circumstances under which it had taken place, and proposing a renewal of the peace which had subsisted between Augustus and his father.[1] Apparently, he said nothing about Armenia, but preferred a demand for the surrender of his four brothers, whom no doubt he designed to destroy. The answer of Augustus was

[1] Dio Cass. lv. 11. It has been usual to regard this passage of Dio (recovered from the *Excerpt. de Legationibus*) as belonging to the reign of Phraates IV., and not of Phraataces; but I have no doubt that it refers to the latter. The phrase τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ εἰρήνῃ ἀπαιτῶν is by itself decisive. There were no brothers of Phraates at Rome whom he could demand. Neither could Augustus have called in question the royal title of Phraates, with whom he had kept up diplomatic intercourse as unquestioned King of Parthia for nearly thirty years. The misconception has arisen from the *name*. But it should be remembered that the form Phraataces is a mere diminutive of Phraates, and that it is found only in Josephus, whose Parthian names are not always to be depended upon. (See note 2 on p. 214.)

severe in the extreme. Addressing Phraataces by his bare name, without adding the title of king, he required him to lay aside the royal appellation, which he had arrogantly and without any warrant assumed, and at the same time to withdraw his forces from Armenia.[1] On the surrender of the Parthian princes he kept silence, ignoring a demand which he had no intention of according. It was clearly his design to set up one of the elder brothers as a rival claimant to Phraataces, or at any rate to alarm him with the notion that, unless he made concessions, this policy would be adopted. But Phraataces was not to be frightened by a mere message. He responded to Augustus after his own fashion, despatching to him a letter wherein he took to himself the favourite Parthian title of 'king of kings,' and addressed the Roman Emperor simply as 'Cæsar.'[2] The attitude of defiance would no doubt have been maintained, had Augustus confined himself to menaces; when, however, it appeared that active measures would be taken, when Augustus, in B.C. 1, sent his grandson, Caius, to the East, with orders to re-establish the Roman influence in Armenia even at the cost of a Parthian war, and that prince showed himself in Syria with all the magnificent surroundings of the Imperial dignity, the Parthian monarch became alarmed. He had an interview with Caius in the spring of A.D. 1, upon an island in the Euphrates;[3] where the terms of an arrangement between the two Empires were dis-

[1] Dio Cass. lv. 11. Τό τε ὄνομα τὸ βασιλικὸν καταθέσθαι, καὶ τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἀποστῆναι προσέταξε.

[2] Ibid. Ὁ Πάρθος οὐχ ὅσον οὐ κατέπτηξεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντέγραψεν οἱ τά τε ἄλλα ὑπερφρονῶς, καὶ αὐτὸν μὲν βασιλέα βασιλέων ἐκεῖνον δὲ Καίσαρα μόνον ὀνομάσας.

[3] Vell. Pat. ii. 101. This interview is placed by some in A.D. 2 (Clinton, *F. H.* vol. iii. p. 262; Merivale, *Roman Empire*, vol. iv. pp. 285, 286); but it seems unlikely that Caius would have delayed so long the main purpose of his Eastern expedition. In the Tauchnitz edition of Velleius, the date A.D. 1 is given for it.

cussed and settled. The armies of the two chiefs were drawn up on the opposite banks of the river, facing one another; and the chiefs themselves, accompanied by an equal number of attendants, proceeded to deliberate in the sight of both hosts. Satisfactory pledges having been given by the Parthian monarch, the prince and king in turn entertained each other on the borders of their respective dominions;[1] and Caius returned into Syria, having obtained an engagement from the Parthians to abstain from any further interference with Armenian affairs.[2] The engagement appears to have been honourably kept; for when, shortly afterwards, fresh complications occurred, and Caius in endeavouring to settle them received his death-wound before the walls of an Armenian town,[3] we do not hear of Parthia as in any way involved in the unfortunate occurrence. The Romans and their partisans in the country were left to settle the Armenian succession as they pleased; and Parthia kept herself wholly aloof from the matters transacted upon her borders.

One cause—perhaps the main cause—of this abstinence, and of the engagement to abstain entered into by Phraataces, was doubtless the unsettled state of things in Parthia itself.[4] The circumstances under

[1] Velleius, who gives these details, was himself present at the meeting, and evidently regards it as an event of first-rate importance. 'Quod spectaculum,' he says, 'stantis ex diverso, hinc Romani, illinc Parthorum exercitus, cum duo inter se eminentissima imperiorum et hominum coirent capita, *perquam clarum et memorabile*, sub initia stipendiorum meorum, tribuno militum mihi visere contigit.' That Phraataces, and not Phraates, was the Parthian monarch present appears from the MS. reading of the preceding sentence, which runs thus: 'Cum rege Parthorum, eminentissimo juvene, in insula quam amnis Euphrates ambiebat, æquato utriusque partis numero, coiit.' Recent editors have altered 'eminentissimo juvene' into 'eminentissimus juvenis.'

[2] Dio Cass. lv. 11. Ὁ δὲ δὴ Φραάτης καταλλάγη ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἀποστῆναι.

[3] Vell. Pat. ii. 102; Suet. *Octav.* § 65; Tacit. *Ann.* i. 3; Zonaras, p. 539, D.

[4] Dio (l.s.c.) notes this, assigning two reasons for the withdrawal of the Parthian claims to Armenia,

which that prince had made himself king, though not unparalleled in the Parthian annals, were such as naturally tended towards civil strife, and as were apt to produce in Parthia internal difficulties, if not disorders or commotions. Phraataces soon found that he would have a hard task to establish his rule. The nobles objected to him, not only the murder of his father, but his descent from an Italian concubine, and the incestuous commerce which he was supposed to maintain with her.[1] They had perhaps grounds for this last charge. At any rate Phraataces provoked suspicion by the singular favours and honours which he granted to a woman whose origin was mean and extraction foreign. Not content with private marks of esteem and love, he departed from the practice of all former Parthian sovereigns[2] in placing her effigy upon his coins; and he accompanied this act with fulsome and absurd titles. Musa was styled, not merely 'Queen,' but 'Heavenly Goddess,'[3] as if the realities of slave origin and concubinage could be covered by the fiction of an

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the presence of Caius in Syria, and the Parthian king's expectation of disturbances among his subjects (*τὰ οἰκεῖα ταραττόμενα μίσει αὐτοῦ ὑπετόπασε*).

[1] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4.

[2] It is perhaps doubtful whether Phraates IV. had not done the same during his later years, as, Mionnet (*Médailles*, supplément. tom. viii. pp. 441-443) and Mr. Lindsay (*History and Coinage*, p. 149) imagine. On the whole, however, I incline to the belief that the Musa coins belong wholly to Phraataces.

[3] The coins of Phraataces have on the one side his head, which is being crowned by two Victories; on the other the head of Musa, with the legend ΜΟΥΣΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΘΕΑΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑΣ.

COIN OF PHRAATACES AND MOUSA.

apotheosis. It is not surprising that the proud Parthian nobles were offended by these proceedings, and determined to rid themselves of a monarch whom they at once hated and despised. Within a few years of his obtaining the throne an insurrection broke out against his authority; and after a brief struggle he was deprived of his crown and put to death.[1] The nobles then elected an Arsacid, named Orodes, whose residence at the time and relationship to the former monarchs are uncertain. It seems probable[2] that, like most princes of the blood royal, he had taken refuge in a foreign country from the suspicions and dangers that beset all possible pretenders to the royal dignity in Parthia, and was living in retirement, unexpectant of any such offer, when a deputation of Parthian nobles arrived and brought him the intelligence of his election. It might have been expected that, obtaining the crown under these circumstances, he would have ruled well; but, according to Josephus (who is here, unfortunately, our sole authority), he very soon displayed so much violence and cruelty of disposition, that his rule was felt to be intolerable; and the Parthians, again breaking into insurrection, rid themselves of him, killing him either at a banquet or on a hunting excursion.[3] This done, they sent to Rome, and requested Augustus to allow Vonones, the eldest son of Phraates IV., to return to Parthia in order that he might receive his father's kingdom.[4] The Emperor

They bear the three dates IT, AIT, and EIT, or B.C. 2, B.C. 1, and A.D. 4. (See for the last-mentioned date, *Numismatic Chronicle*, New Series, No. xliii. p. 218.)

[1] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4.

[2] This seems to follow from the expression used by Josephus, οἱ γενναιότατοι Πάρθων . . . Ὀρώδην ἐκάλουν πρεσβεύσαντες.

[3] Joseph. l. s. c. The violent deaths of at least two kings between Phraates IV. and Artabanus III. are attested by Tacitus (*Ann.* ii. 2), who says: 'Post finem Phraatis et *sequentium regum ob internas cædes*,' &c.

[4] Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.; Joseph. l.s.c.; Suet. *Tib.* § 16.

complied readily enough, since he regarded his own dignity as advanced by the transaction; and the Parthians at first welcomed the object of their choice with rejoicings. But after a little time their sentiments altered. The young prince, bred up in Rome, and accustomed to the refinements of Western civilisation, neglected the occupations which seemed to his subjects alone worthy of a monarch's regard, absented himself from the hunting-field, took small pleasure in riding, when he passed through the streets indulged in the foreign luxury of a litter, shrank with disgust from the rude and coarse feastings which formed a portion of the national manners. He had, moreover, brought with him from the place of his exile a number of Greek companions, whom the Parthians despised and ridiculed; and the favours bestowed on these foreign interlopers were seen with jealousy and rage. It was in vain that he endeavoured to conciliate his offended subjects by the openness of his manners and the facility with which he allowed access to his person. In their prejudiced eyes virtues and graces unknown to the nation hitherto were not merits but defects,[1] and rather increased than diminished their aversion. Having conceived a dislike for the monarch personally, they began to look back with dissatisfaction on their own act in sending for him. 'Parthia,' they said, 'had indeed degenerated from her former self to have requested a king to be sent her who belonged to another world and had had a hostile civilisation ingrained into him. All the glory gained by destroying Crassus and repulsing Antony was utterly lost and gone, if the country was to be ruled by Cæsar's bond-slave, and the throne of the Arsacidæ to be treated like a Roman province.' It

[1] 'Ignotæ Parthis virtutes nova vitia.' (Tacit. l.s.c.)

would have been bad enough to have had a prince imposed on them by the will of a superior, if they had been conquered; it was worse, in all respects worse, to suffer such an insult, when they had not even had war made on them.' Under the influence of such feelings as these, the Parthians, after tolerating Vonones for a few years, rose against him (ab. A.D. 16), and summoned Artabanus, an Arsacid who had grown to manhood among the Dahæ of the Caspian region, but was at this time king of Media Atropatêné, to rule over them.[1]

It was seldom that a crown was declined in the ancient world; and Artabanus, on receiving the overture, at once expressed his willingness to accept the proffered dignity. He invaded Parthia at the head of an army consisting of his own subjects, and engaged Vonones, to whom in his difficulties the bulk of the Parthian people had rallied. The engagement resulted in the defeat of the Median monarch,[2] who returned to his own country, and, having collected a larger army, made a second invasion. This time he was successful. Vonones fled on horseback to Seleucia with a small body of followers; while his defeated army, following in his track, was pressed upon by the victorious Mede, and suffered great losses. Artabanus

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 3. 'Apud Dahas adultus.' Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* l.s.c. Ἀρτάβανον Μηδείας βασιλεύοντα, γένος Ἀρσακιδῶν.

[2] Vonones commemorated his victory in the Roman fashion by striking coins which bore upon the one side his head, with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΝΩΝΗΣ; and on the other a Victory, with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΟΝΩΝΗΣ ΝΕΙΚΗΣΑΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΝ.

COIN OF VONONES I.

having entered Ctesiphon in triumph, was immediately proclaimed king.[1] Vonones, escaping from Seleucia, took refuge among the Armenians; and, as it happened that just at this time the Armenian throne was vacant, not only was an asylum granted him, but he was made king of the country.[2] It was impossible that Artabanus should tamely submit to an arrangement which would have placed his deadly enemy in a position to cause him constant annoyance. He, therefore, at once remonstrated, both in Armenia and at Rome. As Rome now claimed the investiture of the Armenian monarchs, he sent an embassy to Tiberius, and threatened war if Vonones were acknowledged; while at the same time he applied to Armenia and required the surrender of the refugee. An important section of the Armenian nation was inclined to grant his demand;[3] Tiberius, who would willingly have supported Vonones, drew back before the Parthian threats;[4] Vonones found himself in imminent danger, and, under the circumstances, determined on quitting Armenia and betaking himself to the protection of the Roman governor of Syria. This was Creticus Silanus, who received him gladly, gave him a guard, and allowed him the state and title of king.[5] Meanwhile Artabanus laid claim to Armenia, and suggested as a candidate for the throne one of his own sons, Orodes.[6]

[1] Joseph. l.s.c.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 4.

[3] Οἱ περὶ Νιφάτην δυνατοὶ τῶν Ἀρμενίων Ἀρταβάνῳ προστίθενται. (Joseph. l.s.c.)

[4] Josephus expresses this broadly. Ὁ Τιβέριος αὐτῷ ἀπείπε, πρὸς . . . τοῦ Πάρθου τὰς ἀπειλάς. Tacitus implies it when he says: 'Si nostra vi defenderetur, bellum adversus Parthos sumendum erat.'

[5] Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 4, *ad fin.*

[6] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4, *ad fin.* It is supposed by some that Josephus in this passage refers to the establishment of Arsaces, another son of Artabanus, on the throne of Armenia, nearly twenty years afterwards. But the close connection of the clause with one in which he speaks of Vonones as guarded in Syria, limits the date to A.D. 16–18. That Artabanus had a son, Orodes, distinct from Arsaces, king of Armenia, appears from Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 33.

Under these circumstances, the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, who had recently succeeded Augustus, resolved to dispatch to the East a personage of importance, who should command the respect and attention of the Oriental powers by his dignity, and impose upon them by the pomp and splendour with which he was surrounded. He selected for this office Germanicus, his nephew, the eldest son of his deceased brother, Drusus, a prince of much promise, amiable in his disposition, courteous and affable in his manners, a good soldier, and a man generally popular. The more to strike the minds of the Orientals, he gave Germanicus no usual title or province, but invested him with an extraordinary command over all the Roman dominions to the east of the Hellespont,[1] thus rendering him a sort of monarch of Roman Asia. Full powers were granted him for making peace or war, for levying troops, annexing provinces, appointing subject kings, and performing other sovereign acts, without referring back to Rome for instructions. A train of unusual magnificence accompanied him to his charge, calculated to impress the Orientals with the conviction that this was no common negotiator. Germanicus arrived in Asia early in A.D. 18, and applied himself at once to his task. Entering Armenia at the head of his troops, he proceeded to the capital, Artaxata,[2] and having ascertained the wishes of the Armenians themselves, determined on his course of conduct. To have insisted on the restoration of Vonones would have been grievously to offend the Armenians who had expelled him, and at the same time to provoke the Parthians, who could not have tolerated a pretender in

[1] 'Permissæ Germanico provinciæ, quæ mari dividuntur.' Tac. *Ann.* ii. 43.

[2] Ibid. ii. 56.

a position of power upon their borders; to have allowed the pretensions of the Parthian monarch, and accepted the candidature of his son, Orodes, would have lowered Rome in the opinion of all the surrounding nations, and been equivalent to an abdication of all influence in the affairs of Western Asia. Germanicus avoided either extreme, and found happily a middle course. It happened that there was a foreign prince settled in Armenia, who having grown up there had assimilated himself in all respects to the Armenian ideas and habits, and had thereby won golden opinions from both the nobles and the people. This was Zeno, the son of Polemo, once king of the curtailed Pontus, and afterwards of the Lesser Armenia,[1] an outlying Roman dependency. The Armenians themselves suggested that Zeno should be their monarch; and Germanicus saw a way out of his difficulties in the suggestion. At the seat of government, Artaxata, in the presence of a vast multitude of the people, with the consent and approval of the principal nobles, he placed with his own hand the diadem on the brow of the favoured prince, and saluted him as king under the new name of 'Artaxias.'[2] He then returned into Syria, where he was shortly afterwards visited by ambassadors from the Parthian monarch.[3] Artabanus reminded him of the peace concluded between Rome

[1] See above, p. 205, note [5].

[2] Tacitus says (l. s. c.) that the name was taken from that of the city Artaxata, which is absurd; for Artaxata is *Artaxia-sata*, 'Artaxias's city' (compare Samosata, and see Strab. xi. 14, § 6), and itself took its name from the first Artaxias. Dean Merivale observes that the word 'signified greatness or sovereignty' (vol. v. p. 192); which is true, but not of much importance, since the derivation would scarcely occur to either Zeno or his subjects. What was needed was that the new king should exchange his Greek name for a native one. He chose Artaxias as that of two previous monarchs who had distinguished themselves.

[3] Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 58.

and Parthia in the reign of Augustus, and assumed that the circumstances of his own appointment to the throne had in no way interfered with it. He would be glad, he said, to renew with Germanicus the interchange of friendly assurances which had passed between his predecessor, Phraataces, and Caius; and to accommodate the Roman general, he would willingly come to meet him as far as the Euphrates; meanwhile, until the meeting could take place, he must request that Vonones should be removed to a greater distance from the Parthian frontier, and that he should not be allowed to continue the correspondence in which he was engaged with many of the Parthian nobles for the purpose of raising fresh troubles. Germanicus replied politely, but indefinitely, to the proposal of an interview, which he may have thought unnecessary, and open to misconstruction. To the request for the removal of Vonones he consented.[1] Vonones was transferred from Syria to the neighbouring province of Cilicia; and the city of Pompeiopolis, built by the great Pompey on the site of the ancient Soli, was assigned to him as his residence. With this arrangement the Parthian monarch appears to have been contented. Vonones on the other hand was so dissatisfied with the change that in the course of the next year (A.D. 19) he endeavoured to make his escape; his flight was, however, discovered, and pursuit being made, he was overtaken and slain on the banks of the Pyramus.[2] Thus perished ingloriously one of the least blameable and most unfortunate of the Parthian princes.

[1] Germanicus was believed to be actuated on this occasion in part by his hostility to the governor of Syria, Piso, and his wife, Plancina, whom Vonones had courted. But it may be doubted whether he allowed motives of this kind to influence him.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 68.

After the death of Germanicus, in A.D. 19, the details of the Parthian history are for some years unknown to us. It appears that during this interval Artabanus was engaged in wars with several of the nations upon his borders,[1] and met with so much success that he came after a while to desire, rather than fear, a rupture with Rome. He knew that Tiberius was now an old man,[2] and that he was disinclined to engage in distant wars; he was aware that Germanicus was dead; and he was probably not much afraid of L. Vitellius, the governor of Syria, who had been recently deputed by Tiberius to administer that province.[3] Accordingly in A.D. 34, the Armenian throne being once more vacant by the death of Artaxias (Zeno), he suddenly seized the country, and appointed his eldest son, whom Dio and Tacitus call simply Arsaces,[4] to be king. At the same time he sent ambassadors to require the restoration of the treasure which Vonones had carried off from Parthia and had left behind him in Syria or Cilicia. To this plain and definite demand were added certain vague threats, or boasts, to the effect that he was the rightful master of all the territory that had belonged of old to Macedonia or Persia, and that it was his intention to resume possession of the provinces, whereto, as the representa-

COIN OF ARTABANUS III.

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 31.

[2] Tiberius was seventy-five in A.D. 34.

[3] Vitellius, who was made consul at the beginning of A.D. 34, appears (like Germanicus) to have at once set out for his province. (See Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 2, and compare Burton, *Hist. of First Three Centuries*, vol. i. p. 125.)

[4] It is almost certain that this prince must have had some real personal name besides the family title of Arsaces. (See Strab. xv. 1, § 36.)

tive of Cyrus and Alexander, he was entitled.[1] He is said to have even commenced operations against Cappadocia,[2] which was an actual portion of the Roman Empire, when he found that Tiberius, so far from resenting the seizure of Armenia, had sent instructions to Vitellius, that he was to cultivate peaceful relations with Parthia.[3] Apparently he thought that a good opportunity had arisen for picking a quarrel with his Western neighbour, and was determined to take advantage of it. The aged despot, hidden in his retreat of Capreæ, seemed to him a pure object of contempt; and he entertained the confident hope of defeating his armies and annexing portions of his territory.

But Tiberius was under no circumstances a man to be wholly despised. Simultaneously with the Parthian demands and threats, intelligence reached him that the subjects of Artabanus were greatly dissatisfied with his rule, and that it would be easy by fomenting the discontent to bring about a revolution.[4] Some of the nobles even went in person to Rome (A.D. 35), and suggested that if Phraates, one of the surviving sons of Phraates IV., were to appear under Roman protection upon the banks of the Euphrates, an insurrection would immediately break out. Artabanus, they said, among his other cruelties, had put to death almost all the adult males of the Arsacid family; a successful revolution could not be hoped for without an Arsacid leader; if Tiberius, however, would deliver to them the prince for whom they asked, this difficulty would be removed, and there was then every reason to expect a

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 31.

[2] Dio Cass. lviii. 26.

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 4. Πέμπει δὲ καὶ Τιβέριος ὡς Οὐϊτέλλιον γράμματα, κελεύων αὐτὸν πράσσειν φιλίαν πρὸς Ἀρτάβανον τὸν Πάρθων βασιλέα· ἐφόβει γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐχθρὸς ὢν, καὶ Ἀρμενίαν παρεσπασμένος, μὴ ἐπὶ πλέον κακουργῇ.

[4] Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.

happy issue to the rebellion. The Emperor was not hard to persuade; he no doubt argued, that whatever became of the attempt and those engaged in it, one result at least was certain—Artabanus would find plenty of work to occupy him at home, and would desist from his foreign aggressions. He therefore let Phraates take his departure and proceed to Syria, glad to meet the danger which had threatened him by craft and policy rather than by force of arms.[1]

Artabanus soon became aware of the intrigue. He found that the chief conspirators in Parthia were a certain Sinnaces, a nobleman distinguished alike for his high birth and his great riches, and a eunuch named Abdus, who held a position about the court, and was otherwise a personage of importance. It would have been easy to seize these two men, and execute them; but Artabanus was uncertain how far the conspiracy extended, and thought it most prudent to defer bringing matters to a crisis. He therefore dissembled, and was content to cause a delay, first by administering to Abdus a slow poison, and then by engaging Sinnaces so constantly in affairs of state, that he had little or no time to devote to plotting. Successful thus far by his own cunning and dexterity, he was further helped by a stroke of good fortune, on which he could not have calculated. Phraates, who thought that after forty years of residence in Rome, it was necessary to fit himself for the position of Parthian king by resuming the long-disused habits of his nation, was carried off, after a short residence in Syria, by a disease, which he was supposed to have contracted

[1] 'Destinata retinens, consiliis et astu res externas moliri; arma procul habere.' Tac. *Ann.* vi. 32.

through the change in his mode of life.[1] His death must for the time have paralysed the conspirators, and have greatly relieved Artabanus. It was perhaps now, under the stimulus of a sudden change from feelings of extreme alarm to fancied security, that he wrote the famous letter to Tiberius, in which he reproached him for his cruelty, cowardice, and luxuriousness of living, and recommended him to satisfy the just desires of the subjects who hated him, by an immediate suicide.[2]

This letter, if genuine, must be pronounced under any circumstances a folly; and if really sent at this time, it may have had tragical consequences. It is remarkable that Tiberius, on learning the death of Phraates, instead of relaxing, intensified his efforts. Not only did he at once send out to Syria another pretender, Tiridates, a nephew of the deceased prince,[3] in order to replace him, but he made endeavours, such as we do not hear of before, to engage other nations in the struggle;[4] and further, he enlarged the commission of Vitellius, giving him a general superintendence over the affairs of the East. Thus Artabanus found himself in greater peril than ever, and if he had really indulged in the silly effusion ascribed to him, was rightly punished. Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, a portion of the modern Georgia, incited by Tiberius,

[1] Tacit. l.s.c.; Dio Cass. lviii. 26.

[2] Sueton. *Tib.* § 66:—'Quin et Artabani, Parthorum regis, lacer-atus est literis, parricidia et cædes et ignaviam et luxuriam objicientis, monentisque ut voluntaria morte maximo justissimoque civium odio quamprimum satisfaceret.'

[3] Dean Merivale calls Tiridates 'the *son* of Phraates' (*Rom. Empire*, vol. v. p. 416); but if this had been so, Tacitus would most certainly have mentioned it. Tacitus calls him 'sanguinis ejusdem' (of the same family), and speaks of the elder Phraates (Phraates IV.) as his grandfather (*Ann.* vi. 37), but leaves us to guess which son of this king was his father. I suspect it was either Rhodaspes or Seraspadanes.

[4] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 32; Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 4.

took the field (A.D. 35), and proclaimed his intention of placing his brother, Mithridates, on the Armenian throne.[1] Having by corruption succeeded in bringing about the murder of Arsaces by his attendants,[2] he marched into Armenia, and became master of the capital without meeting any resistance. Artabanus, upon this, sent his son Orodes to maintain the Parthian cause in the disputed province; but he proved no match for the Iberian, who was superior in numbers, in the variety of his troops, and in familiarity with the localities. Pharasmanes had obtained the assistance of his neighbours, the Albanians, and, opening the passes of the Caucasus, had admitted through them a number of the Scythic or Sarmatian hordes,[3] who were always ready, when their swords were hired, to take a part in the quarrels of the south. Orodes was unable to procure either mercenaries or allies,[4] and had to contend unassisted against the three enemies who had joined their forces to oppose him. For some time he prudently declined an engagement; but it was difficult to restrain the ardour of his troops, whom the enemy exasperated by their reproaches.[5] After a while he was compelled to accept the battle which Pharasmanes incessantly offered. His force consisted entirely of cavalry, while Pharasmanes had besides his horse a powerful body of infantry. The battle was nevertheless stoutly contested;

[1] Tiberius had suggested this candidate. (Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.)

[2] Ibid. vi. 33.

[3] Tacitus calls them Sarmatians (*Ann.* vi. 33); Josephus, Scyths (*Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 4). Both writers absurdly bring them through 'the *Caspian* Gates'; but it is clear that the Mozdok pass of the Caucasus is meant.

[4] The Sarmatians were ready to have sold their services to both sides; but the Iberians guarded the main pass through the Caucasus; and the Derbend pass, between the mountains and the Caspian, was (according to Tacitus) impassable during the summer time, being then flooded by the sea. (*Ann.* l.s.c.)

[5] Ibid. vi. 34.

and the victory might have been doubtful, had it not happened that in a hand-to-hand combat between the two commanders, Orodes was struck to the ground by his antagonist, and thought by most of his own men to be killed.[1] As usual under such circumstances in the East, a rout followed. If we may believe Josephus,[2] 'many tens of thousands' were slain. Armenia was wholly lost; and Artabanus found himself left with diminished resources and tarnished fame to meet the intrigues of his domestic enemies.

Still, he would not succumb without an effort. In the spring of A.D. 36, having levied the whole force of the Empire, he took the field and marched northwards, determined, if possible, to revenge himself on the Iberians and recover his lost province.[3] But his first efforts were unsuccessful; and before he could renew them, Vitellius put himself at the head of his legions, and marching towards the Euphrates threatened Mesopotamia with invasion. Placed thus between two fires, the Parthian monarch felt that he had no choice but to withdraw from Armenia and return to the defence of his own proper territories, which in his absence must have lain temptingly open to an enemy. His return caused Vitellius to change his tactics. Instead of measuring his strength against that which still remained to Artabanus, he resumed the weapon of intrigue so dear to his master, and proceeded by a lavish expenditure of money[4] to excite disaffection once more among the Parthian nobles. This time conspiracy was successful. The military disasters of the

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 35.
[2] *Ant. Jud.* l.s.c.
[3] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 36.
[4] Πομπῇ χρημάτων εἰς τε συγγενεῖς καὶ φίλους τοὺς ἐκείνου. (Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* l.s.c.) Tacitus omits this feature.

last two years had alienated from Artabanus the affections of those whom his previous cruelties had failed to disgust or alarm; and he found himself without any armed force whereon he could rely, beyond a small body of foreign guards which he maintained about his person. It seemed to him that his only safety was in flight; and accordingly he quitted his capital and removed himself hastily into Hyrcania, which was in the immediate vicinity of the Scythian Dahæ, among whom he had been brought up. Here the natives were friendly to him, and he lived a retired life, waiting (as he said) until the Parthians, who could judge an absent prince with equity, though they could not long continue faithful to a present one, should repent of their behaviour to him.[1]

Upon learning the flight of Artabanus, Vitellius advanced to the banks of the Euphrates, and introduced Tiridates into his kingdom.[2] Fortunate omens were said to have accompanied the passage of the river; and these were followed by adhesions of greater importance. Ornospades, satrap of Mesopotamia, was the first to join the standard of the pretender with a large body of horse. He was followed by the conspirator Sinnaces, his father Abdageses, the keeper of the king's treasures, and other personages of high position. The Greek cities in Mesopotamia readily opened their gates to a monarch long domiciled at Rome, from whom they expected a politeness and refinement that would harmonise better with their feelings than the manners of the late king, bred up among the uncivilised Scyths. Parthian towns, like

[1] 'Interim posse Parthos, absentium æquos, præsentibus mobiles, ad pœnitentiam mutari.' Tac. *Ann.* vi. 36, *ad fin.*

[2] Ibid. vi. 37. The Roman general almost immediately retired.

Halus and Artemita,[1] followed their example. Seleucia, the second city in the Empire, received the new monarch with an obsequiousness that bordered on adulation.[2] Not content with paying him all customary royal honours, they appended to their acclamations disparaging remarks upon his predecessor, whom they affected to regard as the issue of an adulterous intrigue, and as no true Arsacid. Tiridates was pleased to reward the unseemly flattery of these degenerate Greeks by a new arrangement of their constitution. Hitherto they had lived under the government of a Senate of Three Hundred members, the wisest and wealthiest of the citizens, a certain control being, however, secured to the people. Artabanus had recently modified the constitution in an aristocratic sense; and therefore Tiridates pursued the contrary course, and established an unbridled democracy in the place of a mixed government. He then entered Ctesiphon, the capital, and after waiting some days for certain noblemen, who had expressed a wish to attend his coronation but continually put off their coming, he was crowned in the ordinary manner by the Surena of the time being, in the sight and amid the acclamations of a vast multitude.

The pretender now regarded his work as completed, and forbore any further efforts. The example of the Western provinces would, he assumed, be followed by the Eastern, and the monarch approved by Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and the capital would carry, as a matter of course, the rest of the nation. Policy required that the general acquiescence should not have been

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 41. Artemita was in Sittacênê, not far from Ctesiphon (Strab. xvi. 1, § 7). The site of Halus is unknown.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 42.

taken for granted. Tiridates should have made a military progress through the East, no less than the West,[1] and have sought out his rival in the distant Hyrcania, and slain him, or driven him beyond the borders. Instead of thus occupying himself, he was content to besiege a stronghold where Artabanus had left his treasure and his harem. This conduct was imprudent; and the imprudence cost him his crown. That fickle temper which Artabanus had noted in his countrymen began to work so soon as the new king was well installed in his office; the coveted post of chief vizier could but be assigned to one, and the selection of the fortunate individual was the disappointment of a host of expectants; nobles absent from the coronation, whether by choice or necessity, began to be afraid that their absence would cost them dear, when Tiridates had time to reflect upon it and to listen to their detractors. The thoughts of the malcontents turned towards their dethroned monarch; and emissaries were dispatched to seek him out, and put before him the project of a restoration. He was found in Hyrcania, in a miserable dress and plight, living on the produce of his bow. At first he suspected the messengers, believing that their intention was to seize him and deliver him up to Tiridates; but it was not long ere they persuaded him that, whether their affection for himself were true or feigned, their enmity to Tiridates was real.[2] They had indeed no worse charges to bring against this prince than his youth, and the softness of his Roman breeding; but they were evidently in earnest, and had committed themselves too deeply to make it possible for them to retract. Arta-

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 43.

[2] 'Sensit vetus regnandi, falsos in amore, odia non fingere.' (Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 44.)

banus, therefore, accepted their offers, and having obtained the services of a body of Dahæ and other Scyths,[1] proceeded westward, retaining the miserable garb and plight in which he had been found, in order to draw men to his side by pity; and making all haste, in order that his enemies might have less opportunity to prepare obstructions and his friends less time to change their minds. He reached the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon while Tiridates was still doubting what he should do, distracted between the counsels of some who recommended an immediate engagement with the rebels before they recovered from the fatigues of their long march or grew accustomed to act together, and of others who advised a retreat into Mesopotamia, reliance upon the Armenians and other tribes of the north,[2] and a union with the Roman troops, which Vitellius, on the first news of what had happened, had thrown across the Euphrates. The more timid counsel had the support of Abdageses, whom Tiridates had made his vizier, and therefore naturally prevailed, the prince himself being moreover of an unwarlike temper. It had, in appearance, much to recommend it; and if its execution had been in the hands of Occidentals, might have succeeded. But, in the East, the first movement in retreat is taken as a confession of weakness and almost as an act of despair: an order to retire is regarded as a direction to fly. No sooner was the Tigris crossed and the march through Mesopotamia

[1] Tacitus says 'Scyths' only ('auxilia Scytharum'); Josephus, 'Dahæ and Sacæ' (στρατίαν Δαῶν τε καὶ Σακῶν). The early connection of Artabanus with the Dahæ (Tac. *Ann.* ii. 3) makes it probable that he would obtain aid from them.

[2] Tacitus says 'the Armenians *and Elymæans*' (vi. 44); but the latter lay exactly in the opposite quarter to Armenia, and seem to be wrongly mentioned.

begun, than the host of Tiridates melted away like an iceberg in the Gulf Stream. The tribes of the Desert set the example of flight;[1] and in a little time almost the whole army had dispersed, drawing off either to the camp of the enemy or to their homes. Tiridates reached the Euphrates with a mere handful of followers, and crossing into Syria found himself once more safe under the protection of the Romans.

The flight of Tiridates gave Parthia back into the hands of its former ruler. Artabanus reoccupied the throne, apparently without having to fight a battle.[2] He seems, however, not to have felt himself strong enough either to resume his designs upon Armenia, or to retaliate in any way upon the Romans for their support of Tiridates. Mithridates, the Iberian, was left in quiet possession of the Armenian kingdom, and Vitellius found himself unmolested on the Euphrates. Tiberius, however, was anxious that the war with Parthia should be formally terminated, and, having failed in his attempts to fill the Parthian throne with a Roman nominee, was ready to acknowledge Artabanus, and eager to enter into a treaty with him. He instructed Vitellius to this effect;[3] and that officer (late in A.D. 36 or early in A.D. 37), having invited Artabanus to an interview on the Euphrates,[4] persuaded him to

[1] 'Principio a gente Arabum facto.' (Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.) The Arabians of the Mesopotamian Desert are probably intended.

[2] Josephus says: Πολεμήσας τοὺς ἀνθεστηκότας κάτεσχε τὴν ἀρχήν (*Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 4, *ad fin.*); but the fuller narrative of Tacitus shows that there was no actual fighting.

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 5.

[4] Josephus describes this interview at some length. The Euphrates was bridged in the usual way, by a bridge of boats, and the two chiefs met, each accompanied by a guard, midway on the bridge. After the conditions of peace had been settled, Herod Antipas, who was present as a Roman ally, entertained the Parthian king and Roman governor at a banquet, held in a magnificent tent erected midway between the two shores.

terms which were regarded by the Romans as highly honourable to themselves, though Artabanus probably did not feel them to be degrading to Parthia. Peace and amity were re-established between the two nations. Rome, it may be assumed, undertook to withhold her countenance from all pretenders to the Parthian throne, and Parthia withdrew her claims upon Armenia. Artabanus was persuaded to send his son, Darius, with some other Parthians of rank, to Rome, and was thus regarded by the Romans as having given hostages for his good behaviour.[1] He was also induced to throw a few grains of frankincense on the sacrificial fire which burnt in front of the Roman standards and the Imperial images, an act which was accepted at Rome as one of submission and homage.[2] The terms and circumstances of the peace did not become known in Italy till Tiberius had been succeeded by Caligula (March, A.D. 37).[3] When known, they gave great satisfaction, and were regarded as glorious alike to the negotiator, Vitellius, and to the prince whom he represented. The false report was spread that the Parthian monarch had granted to the new Cæsar what his contempt and hatred would have caused him to refuse to Tiberius; and the inclination of the Romans towards their young sovereign was intensified by the ascription to him of a diplomatic triumph which belonged of right to his predecessor.

Contemporaneously with the troubles which have

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[1] The term 'hostage' is used by Josephus (l.s.c.), Suetonius (*Calig.* § 19), and Dio (lix. 27). One would be glad to know whether the Parthians themselves regarded the transaction in the same light as the Romans appear to have done.

[2] Sueton. *Calig.* § 14; Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[3] This seems to me the best mode of reconciling Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 5 with Dio Cass. lix. 27 and Sueton. *Calig.* l.s.c.; *Vitell.* § 2.

been above described, but reaching down, it would seem, a few years beyond them, were other disturbances of a peculiar character in one of the Western provinces of the Empire. The Jewish element in the population of Western Asia had been one of importance from a date anterior to the rise, not only of the Parthian, but even of the Persian, Empire. Dispersed colonies of Jews were to be found in Babylonia, Armenia, Media, Susiana, Mesopotamia, and probably in other Parthian provinces.[1] These colonies dated from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's captivity, and exhibited everywhere the remarkable tendency of the Jewish race to an increase disproportionate to that of the population among which they are settled. The Jewish element became perpetually larger and more important in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, in spite of the draughts which were made upon it by Seleucus and other Syrian princes.[2] Under the Parthians, it would seem that the Mesopotamian Jews enjoyed generally the same sort of toleration, and the same permission to exercise a species of self-government, which Jews and Christians enjoy now in many parts of Turkey. They formed a recognised community, had some cities which were entirely their own, possessed a common treasury, and from time to time sent up to Jerusalem the offerings of the people under the protection of a convoy of 30,000 or 40,000 men.[3] The Parthian kings treated them well, and no doubt valued them as a counterpoise to the disaffected Greeks and Syrians of this part of their Empire. They had no

[1] Compare Acts ii. 9; Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xvi. 6, § 1; xviii. 9, § 1; Philo. *Leg. ad Caium*, p. 1032; Mos. Chor. *Hist. Armen.* ii. 3, 7; &c.

[2] On the transfer of Jews from Babylonia to Antioch, see Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xii. 3, § 1; *contr. Ap.* ii. 4.

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 1.

grievance of which to complain, and it might have been thought very unlikely that any troubles would arise in connexion with them; but circumstances seemingly trivial threw the whole community into commotion, and led on to disasters of a very lamentable character.

Two young Jews, Asinai and Anilai, brothers, natives of Nearda, the city in which the treasury of the community was established, upon suffering some ill-treatment at the hands of the manufacturer who employed them, gave up their trade, and withdrawing to a marshy district between two arms of the Euphrates, made up their minds to live by robbery.[1] A band of needy youths soon gathered about them, and they became the terror of the entire neighbourhood. They exacted a black mail from the peaceable population of shepherds and others who lived near them, made occasional plundering raids to a distance, and required an acknowledgment (*bakhshish*) from travellers. Their doings having become notorious, the satrap of Babylonia marched against them with an army, intending to surprise them on the Sabbath, when it was supposed that they would not fight; but his approach was discovered, it was determined to disregard the obligation of Sabbatical rest, and the satrap was himself surprised and completely defeated. Artabanus, having heard of the disaster, made overtures to the brothers, and after receiving a visit from them at his court, assigned to Asinai, the elder of the two, the entire government of the Babylonian satrapy. The experiment appeared at

[1] This narrative rests wholly upon the authority of Josephus. Its internal probability, its thoroughly Oriental colouring, and its general harmony with what we otherwise know of Parthia at this time, have led to its acceptance by Milman and other writers not inclined to credulity.

first to have completely succeeded. Asinai governed the province with prudence and zeal, and for fifteen years[1] no complaint was made against his administration. But at the end of this time the lawless temper, held in restraint for so long, reasserted itself, not, indeed, in Asinai, but in his brother. Anilai fell in love with the wife of a Parthian magnate, commander (apparently) of the Parthian troops stationed in Babylonia, and, seeing no other way of obtaining his wishes, made war upon the chieftain and killed him. He then married the object of his affections, and might perhaps have been content; but the Jews under Asinai's government remonstrated against the idolatries which the Parthian woman had introduced into a Jewish household, and prevailed on Asinai to require that she should be divorced. His compliance with their wishes proved fatal to him, for the woman, fearing the consequences, contrived to poison Asinai; and the authority which he had wielded passed into the hands of Anilai, without (so far as we hear) any fresh appointment from the Parthian monarch. Anilai had, it appears, no instincts but those of a freebooter, and he was no sooner settled in the government than he proceeded to indulge them by attacking the territory of a neighbouring satrap, Mithridates, who was not only a Parthian of high rank, but had married one of the daughters of Artabanus. Mithridates flew to arms to defend his province; but Anilai fell upon his encampment in the night, completely routed his troops, and took Mithridates himself prisoner. Having subjected him to a gross indignity,[2] he was nevertheless afraid to put him

[1] Probably from about A.D. 19 to 34.

[2] Mithridates was stripped naked and set upon an ass, and in this guise was conveyed from the battle-field to the camp of the victors. (Joseph. *A. J.* xviii. 9, § 6.)

to death, lest the Parthian king should avenge the slaughter of his relative on the Jews of Babylon. Mithridates was consequently released, and returned to his wife, who was so indignant at the insult whereto he had been subjected, that she left him no peace till he collected a second army and resumed the war. Anilai was no ways daunted. Quitting his stronghold in the marshes, he led his troops a distance of ten miles through a hot and dry plain to meet the enemy, thus unnecessarily exhausting them, and exposing them to the attack of their enemies under the most unfavourable circumstances. He was of course defeated with loss; but he himself escaped and revenged himself by carrying fire and sword over the lands of the Babylonians, who had hitherto lived peaceably under his protection. The Babylonians sent to Nearda and demanded his surrender; but the Jews of Nearda, even if they had had the will, had no power to comply. A pretence was then made of arranging matters by negotiation; but the Babylonians, having in this way obtained a knowledge of the position which Anilai and his troops occupied, fell upon them in the night, when they were all either drunk or asleep, and at one stroke exterminated the whole band.

Thus far, no great calamity had occurred. Two Jewish robber-chiefs had been elevated into the position of Parthian satraps; and the result had been, first, fifteen years of peace, and then a short civil war, ending in the destruction of the surviving chief and the annihilation of the band of marauders. But the lamentable consequences of the commotion were now to show themselves. The native Babylonians had always looked with dislike on the Jewish colony, and occasions of actual collision between the two bodies

had not been wholly wanting.[1] The circumstances of the existing time seemed to furnish a good excuse for an outbreak; and scarcely were Anilai and his followers destroyed, when the Jews of Babylon were set upon by their native fellow-citizens. Unable to make an effectual resistance, they resolved to retire from the place, and, at the immense loss which such a migration necessarily costs, they quitted Babylon and transferred themselves in great numbers to Seleucia. Here they lived quietly for five years (about A.D. 34–39), but in the sixth year (A.D. 40) fresh troubles broke out. The remnant of the Jews at Babylon were assailed, either by their old enemies or by a pestilence,[2] and took refuge at Seleucia with their brethren. It happened that at Seleucia there was a feud of long standing between the Syrian population and the Greeks. The Jews naturally joined the Syrians, who were a kindred race, and the two together brought the Greeks under; whereupon these last contrived to come to terms with the Syrians, and persuaded them to join in an attack on their late allies. Against the combined Greeks and Syrians the Jews were powerless, and in the massacre which ensued they lost above 50,000 men. The remnant withdrew to Ctesiphon; but even there the malice of their enemies pursued them, and the persecution was only brought to an end by their quitting the metropolitan cities altogether, and withdrawing to the provincial towns of which they were the sole occupants.[3]

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[1] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 8. Ἀεὶ ὡς ἐπὶ πολὺ διάφοροι καθειστήκεσαν, καὶ ὁποτέροις παραγένοιτο θαῤῥεῖν πρότερον ἀλλήλων ἤπτοντο.

[2] The words of Josephus (τῷ ἕκτῳ ἔτει φθορὰ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἐγένετο αὐτῶν) are ambiguous. Dean Milman understood them to intend a pestilence. (*History of the Jews*, vol. ii. p. 189, 12mo. edit.)

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 9.

The narrative of these events derives its interest, not so much from any sympathy that we can feel with any of the actors in it, as from the light which it throws upon the character of the Parthian rule, and the condition of the countries under Parthian government. In the details given we seem once more to trace a near resemblance between the Parthian system and that of the Turks;[1] we seem to see thrown back into the mirror of the past an image of those terrible conflicts and disorders which have passed before our own eyes in Syria and the Lebanon while under acknowledged Turkish sovereignty. The picture has the same features of antipathies of race unsoftened by time and contact, of perpetual feud bursting out into occasional conflict, of undying religious animosities, of strange combinations, of fearful massacres, and of a government looking tamely on, and allowing things for the most part to take their course. We see how utterly the Parthian system failed to blend together or amalgamate the conquered peoples; and not only so, but how impotent it was even to effect the first object of a government, the securing of peace and tranquillity within its borders. If indeed it were necessary to believe that the picture brought before us represented truthfully the *normal* condition of the people and countries with which it is concerned, we should be forced to conclude that Parthian government was merely another name for anarchy, and that it was only good fortune that preserved the empire from falling to pieces at this early date, within two centuries of its establishment. But there is reason to believe that the reign of Artabanus III. represents, not the normal, but

[1] See above, pp. 25 and 193.

an exceptional state of things—a state of things which could only arise in Parthia when the powers of government were relaxed in consequence of rebellion and civil war.[1] We must remember that Artabanus was actually twice driven from his kingdom, and that during the greater part of his reign he lived in perpetual fear of revolt and insurrection. It is not improbable that the culminating atrocities of the struggle above described synchronised with the second expulsion of the Parthian monarch,[2] and are thus not so much a sign of the ordinary weakness of the Parthian rule, as of the terrible strength of the forces which that rule for the most part kept under control.

The causes which led to the second expulsion of Artabanus[3] are not distinctly stated, but they were probably not very different from those that brought about the first. Artabanus was undoubtedly a harsh ruler; and those who fell under his displeasure, naturally fearing his severity, and seeing no way of meeting it but by a revolution, were driven to adopt extreme measures. Something like a general combination of the nobles against him seems to have taken place about the year A.D. 40; and it appears that he, on becoming aware of it, determined to quit the capital and throw himself on the protection of one of the tributary monarchs. This was Izates, the sovereign of

[1] Strabo (xi. 9, § 2) praises the Parthian rule as salutary and vigorous (*χρήσιμον πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν*). There can be no doubt that the nation showed something of that aptitude for command and government which distinguishes the Turks.

[2] The Jewish troubles precede in Josephus his account of the death of Caligula, so that apparently they fall into the year A.D. 40. The death of Artabanus, which followed closely upon his second expulsion and restoration (Joseph. *A. J.* xx. 3, § 4), is shown by the series of Parthian coins to have happened in A.D. 42.

[3] This portion of the history depends wholly on the authority of Josephus, who is not perhaps to be implicitly trusted. (See *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, § 1–3.)

Adiabêné, or the tract between the Zab rivers, who is said to have been a convert to Judaism.[1] On the flight of Artabanus to Izates, it would seem that the Megistanes formally deposed him, and elected in his place a certain Kinnam, or Kinnamus, an Arsacid who had been brought up by the king. Izates, when he interfered on behalf of the deposed monarch, was met by the objection that the newly-elected prince had rights which could not be set aside. The difficulty appeared insuperable; but it was overcome by the voluntary act of Kinnamus, who wrote to Artabanus and offered to retire in his favour. Hereupon Artabanus returned and remounted his throne, Kinnamus carrying his magnanimity so far as to strip the diadem from his own brow and replace it on the head of the old monarch. A condition of the restoration was a complete amnesty for all political offences, which was not only promised by Artabanus, but likewise guaranteed by Izates.

It was very shortly after his second restoration to the throne that Artabanus died. One further calamity must, however, be noticed as having fallen within the limits of his reign. The great city of Seleucia, the second in the Empire, shortly after it had experienced the troubles above narrated,[2] revolted absolutely from the Parthian power, and declared itself independent. No account has reached us of the circumstances which caused this revolt; but it was indicative of a feeling that Parthia was beginning to decline, and that the disintegration of the Empire was a thing that might be

[1] Ibid. xx. 2, § 3.

[2] The reduction of Seleucia appears from Tacitus to have fallen into the year A.D. 46. This was, he says (xi. 9), the seventh year after it revolted. The revolt must therefore have taken place in A.D. 40. That it fell in the reign of Artabanus appears from Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 8.

expected. The Seleucians had at no time been contented with their position as Parthian subjects. Whether they supposed that they could stand alone, or whether they looked to enjoying under Roman protection a greater degree of independence than had been allowed them by the Parthians, is uncertain. They revolted, however, in A.D. 40, and declared themselves a self-governing community. It does not appear that the Romans lent them any assistance, or broke for their sake the peace established with Parthia in A.D. 37. The Seleucians had to depend upon themselves alone, and to maintain their rebellion by means of their own resources. No doubt Artabanus proceeded at once to attack them, but his arms made no impression. They were successful in defending their independence during his reign, and for some time afterwards, although compelled in the end to succumb and resume a subject position under their old masters. Artabanus seems to have died in August or September A.D. 42,[1] the year after the death of Caligula. His chequered reign had covered a space which cannot have fallen much short of thirty years.

[1] This date is earlier than that generally assigned, which is A.D. 44 (Heeren, *Manual*, p. 303, E. T.; Lewis, *History of the Parthian Empire*, p. 231; Vaillant, *Arsac. Imperium*, p. 220). But it is rendered certain by the coins, which have for the last year of Artabanus the date ΓΝΤ Λωΐου (= Aug. A.D. 42), and for the first of Vardanes ΓΝΤ Γορπιαι. (= September of the same year).

CHAPTER XV.

Doubts as to the Successor of Artabanus III. First short reign of Gotarzes. He is expelled and Vardanes made King. Reign of Vardanes. His War with Izates. His Death. Second Reign of Gotarzes. His Contest with his Nephew, Meherdates. His Death. Short and inglorious reign of Vonones II.

'Turbatæ Parthorum res, inter ambiguos, quis in regnum acciperetur.'
Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 10.

THERE is considerable doubt as to the immediate successor of Artabanus. According to Josephus,[1] he left his kingdom to his son, Bardanes or Vardanes, and this prince entered without difficulty and at once upon the enjoyment of his sovereignty. According to Tacitus,[2] the person who obtained the throne directly upon the death of Artabanus was his son, Gotarzes, who was generally accepted for king, and might have reigned without having his title disputed, had he not given indications of a harsh and cruel temper. Among other atrocities whereof he was guilty, was the murder of his brother, Artabanus,[3] whom he put to death, together with his wife and son, apparently upon mere suspicion. This bloody initiation of his reign spread alarm among

[1] *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, §. 4. Τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ παιδὶ Οὐαρδάνῃ καταλιπών.

[2] *Ann.* xi. 8. The true meaning of Tacitus in the passage has been questioned (see Walther's *Tacitus*, note *ad loc.*); but for my own part, I cannot feel a doubt that he regards Gotarzes as king before Vardanes.

[3] Some suppose the Artabanus intended to be Artabanus III., the preceding king; but he was the father, not the brother, of Gotarzes. (See Joseph. *Ant. Jud.*, l.s.c., where Vardanes is called the son of Artabanus III., and Gotarzes the brother of Vardanes.)

the nobles, who thereupon determined to exert their constitutional privilege of deposing an obnoxious monarch and supplying his place with a new one. Their choice fell upon Vardanes, brother of Gotarzes, who was residing in a distant province, 350 miles from the Court. Having entered into communications with this prince, they easily induced him to quit his retirement, and to take up arms against the tyrant. Vardanes was ambitious, bold, and prompt: he had no sooner received the invitation of the Megistanes than he set out, and having accomplished his journey to the Court in the space of two days,[1] found Gotarzes wholly unprepared to offer resistance. Thus Vardanes became king without fighting a battle. Gotarzes fled, and escaped into the country of the Dahæ, which lay east of the Caspian Sea, and north of the Parthian province of Hyrcania. Here he was allowed to remain for some time unmolested by his brother, and to form plans and make preparations for the recovery of his lost power.

COIN OF VARDANES I.

The statements of Tacitus are so circumstantial, and his authority as an historian is so great, that we can scarcely hesitate to accept the history as he delivers it, rather than as it is related by the Jewish writer. It is, however, remarkable that the series of Parthian coins presents an appearance of accordance rather with the

[1] The possibility of this feat has been questioned, and it has been proposed to alter the text of Tacitus from 'biduo tria M. passuum' to 'triduo duo M. passuum' (see Walther's *Tacitus*, vol. ii. p. 18). But the feat of Vardanes does not come up to that of Tiberius, who travelled in one night and day 200 Roman (or 184 British) miles to visit his sick brother, Drusus (Plin. *H. N.*, vii. 20).

latter than the former, since it affords no trace of the supposed first reign of Gotarzes in A.D. 42, while it shows Vardanes to have held the throne from Sept. A.D. 42 to at least A.D. 46.[1] Still, this does not absolutely contradict Tacitus. It only proves that the first reign of Gotarzes was comprised within a few weeks, and that before two months had passed from the death of Artabanus, the kingdom was established in the hands of Vardanes. That prince, after the flight of his brother, applied himself for some time to the reduction of the Seleucians,[2] whose continued independence in the midst of a Parthian province he regarded as a disgrace to the Empire. His efforts to take the town failed, however, of success. Being abundantly provisioned and strongly fortified, it was well able to stand a siege; and the high spirit of its inhabitants made them determine to resist to the uttermost. While they still held out, Vardanes was called away to the East, where his brother had been gathering strength, and was once more advancing his pretensions. The Hyrcanians, as well as the Dahæ, had embraced his cause, and Parthia was threatened with dismemberment. Vardanes, having collected his troops, occupied a position in the plain region of Bactria,[3] and there prepared to give battle to his brother, who was likewise at the head of a considerable army. Before, however, an engagement took place, Gotarzes discovered that there was a design among the nobles on either side to rid themselves of both the brothers, and to set up a wholly new king. Apprehensive of the consequences, he communicated

[1] Coins of a uniform type, differing altogether from those of Gotarzes, and reasonably ascribed to Vardanes, bear the dates ΓNT, ΔNT, ENT, SNT, and ZNT, or A.D. 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 8.

[3] 'Bactrianos apud campos.' Tacit. l.s.c.

his discovery to Vardanes; and the result was that the two brothers made up their differences and agreed upon terms of peace. Gotarzes yielded his claim to the crown, and was assigned a residence in Hyrcania, which was, probably, made over to his government. Vardanes then returned to the west, and resuming the siege of Seleucia, compelled the rebel city to a surrender in the seventh year after it had revolted (A.D. 46).[1]

Successful thus far, and regarding his quarrel with his brother as finally arranged, Vardanes proceeded to contemplate a military expedition of the highest importance. The time, he thought, was favourable for reviving the Parthian claim to Armenia,[2] and disputing once more with Rome the possession of a paramount influence over that country. The Roman government of the dependency, since Artabanus formally relinquished it to them, had been far from proving satisfactory. Mithridates, their protégé,[3] had displeased them, and had been summoned to Rome by Caligula,[4] who kept him there a prisoner until his death.[5] Armenia, left without a king, had asserted her independence; and when, after an absence of several years, Mithridates was authorised by Claudius to return to his kingdom, the natives resisted him in arms, and were only brought under his rule by the combined help of the Romans and the Iberians. Forced upon a reluctant people by foreign arms, Mithridates felt himself insecure, and this feeling made him rule

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 9.

[2] Compare Tac. *Ann.* xi. 10 with Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, § 4. The intended 'Roman War' of the latter writer is the projected 'Armenian expedition' of the former.

[3] See above, pp. 231, 232.

[4] Dio Cass. lx. 8; Tac. *Ann.* xi. 8.

[5] Dio Cass. l.s.c.; Senec. *De Tranquill.* § 11.

his subjects with imprudent severity.[1] Under these circumstances, it seemed to Vardanes that it would not be very difficult to recover Armenia, and thus gain a signal triumph over the Romans.

But to engage in so great a matter with a good prospect of success, it was necessary that the war should be approved, not only by himself, but by his principal feudatories.[2] The most important of these was now Izates, king of Adiabêné and Gordyêné,[3] who in the last reign had restored Artabanus to his lost throne.[4] Vardanes, before committing himself by any overt act, appears to have taken this prince into his counsels, and to have requested his opinion on the prudence of affronting the Romans by an interference with Armenian affairs. Izates strenuously opposed the project. He had a personal interest in the matter, since he had sent five of his boys to Rome, to receive there a polite education, and he had also a profound respect for the Roman power and military system. He endeavoured, both by persuasion and reasoning, to induce Vardanes to abandon his design. His arguments may have been cogent, but they were not thought by Vardanes to have much force, and the result of the conference was, that the Great King declared war against his feudatory.[5]

The war had, apparently, but just begun, when fresh troubles broke out in the north-east. Gotarzes

[1] 'Cuncta in Mithridatem fluxere, *atrociorem quam novo regno conducceret*' (Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 9).

[2] A Parthian king could, no doubt, *command* the services of his feudatories; but it depended very much upon themselves what forces they should bring into the field. To obtain any real success, the hearty co-operation of the feudatories was necessary.

[3] Artabanus rewarded Izates by adding this tract to his dominions. (Joseph. *A. J.* xx. 3, § 3.)

[4] See above, p. 247.

[5] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, § 4. Πόλεμον πρὸς Ἰζάτην κατήγγειλεν. Compare the remark of Tacitus—'Exin validissimas *præfecturas* invasit' (*Ann.* xi. 10).

had never ceased to regret his renunciation of his claims, and was now, on the invitation of the Parthian nobility, prepared to come forward again and contest the kingdom with his brother. Vardanes had to relinquish his attempt to coerce Izates, and to hasten to Hyrcania in order to engage the troops which Gotarzes had collected in that distant region. These he met and defeated more than once in the country between the Caspian and Herat;[1] but the success of his military operations failed to strengthen his hold upon the affections of his subjects. Like the generality of the Parthian princes, he showed himself harsh and cruel in the hour of victory, and in conquering an opposition roused an opposition that was fiercer and more formidable. A conspiracy was formed against him shortly after his return from Hyrcania, and he was assassinated while indulging in the national amusement of the chase.[2]

The murder of Vardanes was immediately followed by the restoration of Gotarzes to the throne. There may have been some who doubted his fitness for the regal office,[3] and inclined to keep the throne vacant till they could send to Rome and obtain from thence one of the younger and more civilised Parthian princes. But we may be sure that the general desire was not for a Romanised sovereign, but for a truly national king, one born and bred in the country. Gotarzes was pro-

[1] I cannot follow this campaign in detail, as the rivers 'Erinde' and 'Sinde,' mentioned by Tacitus, are unknown to the geographers.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 10. Josephus gives no details, but says simply *ἀναιροῦσι αὐτόν.*

[3] So Tacitus (l.s.c.). 'Nece Bardanis turbatæ Parthorum res, inter ambiguos, quis in regnum acciperetur. Multi ad Gotarzem inclinabant; quidam ad Meherdatem, prolem Phraatis.' But it may be doubted whether Meherdates was thought of, until Gotarzes had rendered himself obnoxious to his subjects.

claimed by common consent, and without any interval, after the death of Vardanes, and ascended the Parthian throne before the end of the year A.D. 46.[1] It is not likely that his rule would have been resisted had he conducted himself well; but the cruelty of his temper, which had already once cost him his crown, again displayed itself after his restoration, and to this defect was added a slothful indulgence yet more distasteful to his subjects.[2] Some military expeditions which he undertook, moreover, failed of success, and the crime of defeat caused the cup of his offences to brim over. The discontented portion of his people, who were a strong party, sent envoys to the Roman Emperor, Claudius (A.D. 49), and begged that he would surrender to them Meherdates, the grandson of Phraates IV. and son of Vonones, who still remained at Rome in a position between that of a guest and a hostage. 'They were not ignorant,' they said, 'of the treaty which bound the Romans to Parthia, nor did they ask Claudius to infringe it. Their desire was not to throw off the authority of the Arsacidæ, but only to exchange one Arsacid for another. The rule of Gotarzes had become intolerable, alike to the nobility and the common people. He had murdered all his male relatives, or at least all that were within his reach—first his brothers, then his near kinsmen, finally even those whose relationship was remote; nor had he stopped there; he had proceeded to put to death their young children and their pregnant wives. He was sluggish in his habits, unfortunate in his wars, and had betaken

[1] Coins of Vardanes bear the date ZNT, or A.D. 45–46. A coin of Gotarzes is dated ZNT, Παν́μου, or July, A.D. 46.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xi. 10: 'Gotarzes . . . . *per sævitiam ac luxum* adegit Parthos mittere ad Principem Romanum occultas preces.' Compare the expression 'socors domi,' in *Ann.* xii. 10.

himself to cruelty, that men might not despise him for his want of manliness. The friendship between Rome and Parthia was a public matter; it bound the Romans to help the nation allied to them—a nation which, though equal to them in strength, was content on account of its respect for Rome to yield her precedence. Parthian princes were allowed to be hostages in foreign lands for the very reason that then it was always possible, if their own monarch displeased them, for the people to obtain a king from abroad, brought up under milder influences.'[1]

This harangue was made before the Emperor Claudius and the assembled Senate, Meherdates himself being also present. Claudius responded to it favourably. 'He would follow the example of the Divine Augustus, and allow the Parthians to take from Rome the monarch whom they requested. That prince, bred up in the city, had always been remarkable for his moderation. He would (it was to be hoped) regard himself in his new position, not as a master of slaves, but as a ruler of citizens. He would find that clemency and justice were the more appreciated by a barbarous nation, the less they had had experience of them. Meherdates might accompany the Parthian envoys; and a Roman of rank, Caius Cassius, the prefect of Syria, should be instructed to receive them on their arrival in Asia, and to see them safely across the Euphrates.'[2]

The young prince accordingly set out, and reached the city of Zeugma in safety. Here he was joined, not only by a number of the Parthian nobles, but also by the reigning king of Osrhoëné, who bore the usual

[1] This speech is given by Tacitus with his usual brevity (*Ann.* xii. 10). He adds that the envoys said more to the same effect.

[2] Ibid. xii. 11.

name of Abgarus.[1] The Parthians were anxious that he should advance at his best speed and by the shortest route on Ctesiphon, and the Roman governor, Cassius, strongly advised the same course; but Meherdates fell under the influence of the Osrhoëne monarch, who is thought by Tacitus to have been a false friend, and to have determined from the first to do his best for Gotarzes. Abgarus induced Meherdates to proceed from Zeugma to his own capital, Edessa, and there detained him for several days by means of a series of festivities. He then persuaded him, though the winter was approaching, to enter Armenia, and to proceed against his antagonist by the circuitous route of the Upper Tigris, instead of the more direct one through Mesopotamia. In this way much valuable time was lost. The rough mountain-routes and snows of Armenia harassed and fatigued the pretender's troops, while Gotarzes was given an interval during which to collect a tolerably large body of soldiers. Still, the delay was not very great. Meherdates marched probably by Diarbekr, Til, and Jezireh, or, in other words, followed the course of the Tigris, which he crossed in the neighbourhood of Mosul, after taking the small town which represented the ancient Nineveh. His line of march had now brought him into Adiabêné; and it seemed a good omen for the success of his cause that Izates, the powerful monarch of that tract, declared in his favour, and brought a body of troops to his assistance.[2] Gotarzes was in the neighbourhood, but was distrustful of his strength, and desirous of collecting a larger force before committing himself to the hazard of an engagement. He had taken up a strong position with the

[1] See above, pp. 151, 157, 162–164. | [2] Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 13.

river Corma in his front,[1] and remaining on the defensive, contented himself with trying by his emissaries the fidelity of his rival's troops and allies. The plan succeeded. After a little time, the army of Meherdates began to melt away. Izates of Adiabêné and Abgarus of Edessa drew off their contingents, and left the pretender to depend wholly on his Parthian supporters. Even their fidelity was doubtful, and might have given way on further trial: Meherdates therefore resolved, before being wholly deserted, to try the chance of a battle. His adversary was now as willing to engage as himself, since he felt that he was no longer outnumbered. The rivals met, and a fierce and bloody action was fought between the two armies, no important advantage being for a long time gained by either. At length Carrhenes, the chief general on the side of Meherdates, having routed the troops opposed to him and pursued them too hotly, was intercepted by the enemy on his return and either killed or made prisoner. This event proved decisive. The loss of their leader caused the army of Meherdates to fly; and he himself, being induced to entrust his safety to a certain Parrhaces,

[1] The notices of Tacitus do not enable us to follow with any exactness the movements of Gotarzes; but I think there cannot be a doubt that he was protecting Ctesiphon, and that the scene of his manœuvres and of the final engagement was the tract south of Nineveh, between the Tigris and the Zagros mountain range. If the reading 'Arbela' be allowed to stand in *Ann.* xii. 13, we may limit the scene of action a little more, and say that it lay between *Arbil* and Baghdad. Sambulos, the mountain which Gotarzes at first occupied, is probably the modern Mount Sunbulah, between the plains of Ghilan and Deira, in lat. 34° 25′, long. 46° 10′ nearly. This is 'a very remarkable range, far exceeding in height all others at the foot of Zagros' (*Journal of Geograph. Society*, vol. ix. p. 41). On the summit is 'a fine table-land, wooded with dwarf oak,' while the sides are in most places bounded by 'naked and precipitous crags like those of Behistun' (ibid. p. 42). But the second position of Gotarzes, behind the river Corma, cannot be identified, since there are scarcely sufficient grounds for regarding that stream as the Kara-Su, or river of Kirmanshah.

a dependant of his father's, was betrayed by this miscreant, loaded with chains, and given up to his rival. Gotarzes now proved less unmerciful than might have been expected from his general character. Instead of punishing Meherdates with death, he thought it sufficient to insult him with the names of 'foreigner' and 'Roman,' and to render it impossible that he should be again put forward as monarch by subjecting him to mutilation.[1] The Roman historian supposes that this was done to cast a slur upon Rome;[2] but it was a natural measure of precaution under the circumstances, and had probably no more recondite motive than compassion for the youth and inexperience of the pretender.

Gotarzes, having triumphed over his rival, appears to have resolved on commemorating his victory in a novel manner. Instead of striking a new coin, like Vonones,[3] he determined to place his achievement on record by making it the subject of a rock-tablet, which he caused to be engraved on the sacred mountain of Baghistan, adorned already with sculptures and inscriptions by the greatest of the Achæmenian monarchs. The bas-relief and its inscription have been much damaged, both by the waste of ages and the rude hand of man; but enough remains to show that the conqueror was represented as pursuing his enemies in the field, on horseback, while a winged Victory, flying in the air, was on the point of placing a diadem on his head.[4] In the Greek legend which accompanied the

[1] In the East, mutilation of any kind is regarded as incapacitating a man from the exercise of sovereignty. Hence the Persian kings were in the habit, until recently, of blinding all their brothers upon their accession.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 14. 'Ostentui clementiæ suæ, et *in nos dehonestamento.*'

[3] See above, p. 223.

[4] Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, p. 8. 'On y reconnaît néanmoins les silhouettes de plusieurs personnages

sculpture, he was termed 'Satrap of Satraps'—an equivalent of the ordinary title 'King of Kings'; and his conquered rival was mentioned under the name of Mithrates, a corrupt form of the more common Mithridates, or Meherdates.[1]

Very shortly after his victory, Gotarzes died. His last year seems to have been A.D. 51.[2] According to Tacitus, he died a natural death, from the effects of disease;[3] but, according to Josephus, he was the victim of a conspiracy.[4] The authority of Tacitus, here as elsewhere generally, is to be preferred; and we may regard Gotarzes as ending peacefully his unquiet reign, which had begun in A.D. 42, immediately after the death of his father, had been interrupted for four years —from A.D. 42 to A.D. 46—and had then been renewed and lasted from A.D. 46 to A.D. 51. Gotarzes was not a prince of any remarkable talents, or of a character differing in any important respects from the ordinary

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de haute taille, surmontés d'autres plus petits, parmi lesquels se distinguent un cavalier armé d'une lance, et une espèce de gloire ou de renommée couronnant un autre guerrier à cheval.'

[1] Some account of this inscription has been given by Sir R. K. Porter (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 151), by Sir H. Rawlinson (*Geograph. Journal*, vol. ix. p. 115), and by MM. Flandin and Coste (*Voyage en Perse*, Planches anciennes, pl. 119). The best account is that of the second-named traveller, who transcribed the inscription as follows:—ΑΛΦΑΣΑΤΗΣ ΜΙΘΡΑΤΗΣΠΕΠ . . . ΓΩΤΑΡΖΗΣ ΣΑΤΡΑΠΗΣΤΩΝΣΑΤΡΑΠΩΝ . . . . He also read in a corner of the tablet the words ΓΩΤΑΡΣΗΣ ΓΕΟΠΟΘΡΟΣ. It has been argued that the inscription cannot have been set up by *King* Gotarzes, on account of the title 'Satrap of Satraps'; but this argument is not convincing. (See above, ch. vi. p. 88, note [2].) The combination of the names Gotarzes and Meherdates (Mithrates) with the locality, certainly near the scene of the battle, and the winged Victory, common on Parthian coins at exactly this time, is a far more weighty one in favour of the inscription being rightly assigned to the monarch.

[2] A coin of Gotarzes bears the date ΒΞΤ, or A.D. 50–51. One of Vonones II. has ΓΞΤ, or A.D. 51–52.

[3] 'Dein Gotarzes *morbo* obiit' (*Ann.* xii. 14).

[4] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, § 4. Μετ' οὐ πολὺν χρόνον ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς τελευτήσαντα.

Parthian type. He was perhaps even more cruel than the bulk of the Arsacidæ, though his treatment of Meherdates showed that he could be lenient upon occasion. He was more prudent than daring, more politic than brave, more bent on maintaining his own position than on advancing the power or dignity of his country. Parthia owed little or nothing to him. The internal organisation of the country must have suffered from his long wars with his brother and his nephew; its external reputation was not increased by one whose foreign expeditions were uniformly unfortunate.

The successor of Gotarzes was a certain Vonones. His relationship to previous monarchs is doubtful—and may be suspected to have been remote.[1] Gotarzes had murdered or mutilated all the Arsacidæ on whom he could lay his hands; and the Parthians had to send to Media[2] upon his decease in order to obtain a sovereign of the required blood. The coins of Vonones II. are scarce, and have a peculiar rudeness. The only date[3] found upon them is one equivalent to A.D. 51–52; and it would seem that his entire reign was comprised within the space of a few months. Tacitus tells us that his rule was brief and inglorious, marked by no important events, either prosperous or adverse. He was succeeded by his son, Volagases I., who appears to have ascended the throne before the year A.D. 51 had expired.[4]

[1] Philostratus is quoted as calling him 'the younger brother of Artabanus III.' (Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, p. 70.) But the authority of Philostratus on a point of this kind is worthless.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.

[3] The date in question is ΓΞΤ, which corresponds to the last three months of A.D. 51 and the first nine of A.D. 52.

[4] This appears from Tacitus (*Ann.* xii. 44 and 50).

CHAPTER XVI.

Reign of Volagases I. His first attempt on Armenia fails. His quarrel with Izates. Invasion of Parthia Proper by the Dahæ and Sacæ. Second attack of Volagases on Armenia. Tiridates established as King. First Expedition of Corbulo. Half Submission of Volagases. Revolt of Vardanes. Second Expedition of Corbulo. Armenia given to Tigranes. Revolt of Hyrcania. Third attack of Volagases on Armenia. Defeat of Pætus, and re-establishment of Tiridates. Last Expedition of Corbulo, and arrangement of Terms of Peace. Tiridates at Rome. Probable time of the Death of Volagases.

'Genti Parthorum Vologeses imperitabat, materna origine ex pellice Græca.'
Tac. *Ann.* xii. 44.

VONONES the Second left behind him three sons, Volagases, Tiridates, and Pacorus. It is doubtful which of them was the eldest, but, on the whole, most probable that that position belonged to Pacorus. We are told that Volagases obtained the crown by his brothers' yielding up their claims to him,[1] from which we must draw the conclusion that both of them were his elders. These circumstances of his accession will account for much of his subsequent conduct. It happened that he was able at once to bestow a principality upon Pacorus,[2] to whom he felt specially indebted; but in order adequately to reward his other benefactor, he found it necessary to conquer a province and then make

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 44. 'Concessu fratrum regnum adeptus.' The names of the two brothers are given by Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* xx. 2, § 4), and Dio Cassius (lxiii. 5). The former tells us that Pacorus was older than Tiridates.

[2] The government bestowed on Pacorus was that of Media; whether Media Magna or Atropatêné is uncertain.

its government over to him. Hence his frequent attacks upon Armenia, and his numerous wars with Rome for its possession, which led ultimately to an arrangement by which the quiet enjoyment of the Armenian throne was secured to Tiridates.

The circumstances under which Volagases made his first attack upon Armenia were the following. Pharasmanes of Iberia,[1] whose brother, Mithridates, the Romans had (in A.D. 47) replaced upon the Armenian throne, had a son named Rhadamistus, whose lust of power was so great, that to prevent his making an attempt on his own crown, Pharasmanes found it necessary to divert his thoughts to another quarter.[2] Armenia, he suggested, lay near, and was a prize worth winning; Rhadamistus had only to ingratiate himself with the people, and then craftily remove his uncle, and he would probably step with ease into the vacant place. The son took the advice of his father, and in a little time succeeded in getting Pharasmanes into his power, when he ruthlessly put him to death, together with his wife and children.[3] Rhadamistus then, supported by his father, obtained the object of his ambition, and became king. It was known, however, that a considerable number of the Armenians were adverse to a rule which had been brought about by treachery and murder; and it was suspected that, if an attack were made upon him, he would not be supported with much zeal by his subjects. This was the condition of things when Volagases ascended the Parthian throne, and found himself in want of a principality with which he

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[1] See above, p. 231.
[2] Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c.
[3] Ibid. xii. 47. Mithridates and his wife, who was the sister of Rhadamistus, were first smothered. The children were then killed for lamenting their parents.

might reward the services of Tiridates, his brother. It at once occurred to him that a happy chance presented him with an excellent opportunity of acquiring Armenia, and he accordingly proceeded, in the very year of his accession, to make an expedition against it.[1] At first he carried all before him. The Iberian supporters of Rhadamistus fled without risking a battle; his Armenian subjects resisted weakly; Artaxata and Tigranocerta opened their gates; and the country generally submitted. Tiridates enjoyed his kingdom for a few months; but a terrible pestilence, brought about by a severe winter and a want of proper provisions, decimated the Parthian force left in garrison; and Volagases found himself obliged, after a short occupation, to relinquish his conquest. Rhadamistus returned, and, although the Armenians opposed him in arms, contrived to re-establish himself. The Parthians did not renew their efforts, and for three years—from A.D. 51 to A.D. 54—Rhadamistus was left in quiet possession of the Armenian kingdom.[2]

It appears to have been in this interval that the arms of Volagases were directed against one of his great feudatories, Izates. As in Europe during the prevalence of the feudal system, so under the Parthian government, it was always possible that the sovereign might be forced to contend with one of the princes who owed him fealty. Volagases seems to have thought that the position of the Adiabenian monarch was becoming too independent, and that it was necessary to recall him, by a sharp mandate, to his proper position of subordi-

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 50. The first invasion of Volagases falls into the latter part of A.D. 51, which was the year that he became king, according to the coins.

[2] Compare Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 50, 51 with xiii. 6.

nate and tributary. Accordingly, he sent him a demand that he should surrender the special privileges which had been conferred upon him by Artabanus III.,[1] and resume the ordinary status of a Parthian feudatory. Izates, who feared that if he yielded he would find that this demand was only a prelude to others more intolerable, replied by a positive refusal, and immediately prepared to resist an invasion. He sent his wives and children to the strongest fortress within his dominions, collected all the grain that his subjects possessed into fortified places, and laid waste the whole of the open country, so that it should afford no sustenance to an invading army. He then took up a position on the lower Zab, or Caprius, and stood prepared to resist an attack upon his territory. Volagases advanced to the opposite bank of the river, and was preparing to invade Adiabêné, when news reached him of an important attack upon his eastern provinces. A horde of barbarians, consisting of Dahæ and other Scythians, had poured into Parthia Proper, knowing that he was engaged elsewhere, and threatened to carry fire and sword through the entire province. The Parthian monarch considered that it was his first duty to meet these aggressors; and leaving Izates unchastised, he marched away to the north-east to repel the external enemy.[2]

Volagases, after defeating this foe, would no doubt have returned to Adiabêné, and resumed the war with Izates, but in his absence that prince died.[3] Monobazus, his brother, who inherited his crown, could have no claim to the privileges which had been conferred for

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[1] As Volagases was descended from a branch of the Arsacidæ quite distinct from that whereto Artabanus had belonged, there was not the 'ingratitude' in this demand which some writers have seen in it.

[2] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 4, § 2.

[3] Ibid. § 3.

personal services upon Izates; and consequently there was no necessity for the war to be renewed. The bones of Izates were conveyed to the holy soil of Palestine and buried in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Monobazus was accepted by Volagases as his brother's successor without any apparent reluctance, and proved a faithful tributary, on whom his suzerain could place complete dependence.

The quarrel with Izates, and the war with the Dahæ and Sacæ, may have occupied the years A.D. 52 and 53. At any rate it was not till A.D. 54, his fourth year, that Volagases resumed his designs against Armenia.[1] Rhadamistus, though he had more than once had to fly the country, was found in possession as king, and for some time he opposed the progress of the Parthian arms; but, before the year was out, despairing of success, he again fled, and left Volagases to arrange the affairs of Armenia at his pleasure. Tiridates was at once established as king, and Armenia brought into the position of a regular Parthian dependency. The claims of Rome were ignored. Volagases was probably aware that the Imperial throne was occupied by a mere youth, not eighteen years old, one destitute of all warlike tastes, a lover of music and of the arts, who might be expected to submit to the loss of a remote province without much difficulty. He therefore acted as if Rome had no rights in this part of Asia, established his brother at Artaxata, and did not so much as send an embassy to Nero to excuse or explain his acts. These proceedings caused much uneasiness in Italy. If Nero himself cannot be regarded as likely to have felt very keenly the blow struck at the prestige of the Empire, yet there were those among his advisers who could well understand

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xiii. 6.

and appreciate the situation. The ministers of the young prince resolved that efforts on the largest scale should be made. Orders were at once issued for recruiting the Oriental legions, and moving them nearer to Armenia; preparations were set on foot for bridging the Euphrates; Antiochus of Commagêné, and Herod Agrippa II., were required to collect troops and hold themselves in readiness to invade Parthia; the Roman provinces bordering upon Armenia were placed under new governors;[1] above all, Corbulo, regarded as the best general of the time, was summoned from Germany, and assigned the provinces of Cappadocia and Galatia, together with the general superintendence of the war 'for retaining possession of Armenia.'[2] At the same time instructions were sent out to Ummidius, proconsul of Syria, requiring him to co-operate with Corbulo; and arrangements were made to obviate the clashing of authority which was to be feared between two equal commanders. In the spring of A.D. 55 the Roman armies were ready to take the field, and a struggle seemed impending which would recall the times of Antony and Phraates.

But, at the moment when expectation was at its height, and the clang of arms appeared about to resound throughout Western Asia, suddenly a disposition for peace manifested itself. Both Corbulo and Ummidius sent embassies to Volagases, exhorting him to make concessions, and apparently giving him to understand that something less was required of him than the resto-

[1] The Lesser Armenia was assigned to Aristobulus, a son of Herod, king of Chalcis, and a first cousin of Agrippa II. Sophêné, the more southern portion of the Greater Armenia, was entrusted to a certain Sohemus. (Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 7.)

[2] It is characteristic of Roman vanity, which could not bear to admit a loss, that Corbulo's appointment was said to be not 'reciperandæ,' but '*retinendæ* Armeniæ.' (Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 8.)

ration of Armenia to the Romans.[1] Volagases listened favourably to the overtures, and agreed to put into the hands of the Roman commanders the most distinguished members of the royal family as hostages. At the same time, he withdrew his troops from Armenia,[2] which the Romans however did not occupy, and which continued, as it would seem, to be governed by Tiridates. The motive of the Parthian king in acting as he did is obvious. A revolt against his authority had broken out in Parthia, headed by his son, Vardanes; and, until this internal trouble should be suppressed, he could not engage with advantage in a foreign war.[3] The reasons which actuated the Roman generals are far more obscure. It is difficult to understand their omission to press upon Volagases in his difficulties, or their readiness to accept the persons of a few hostages, however high their rank, as an equivalent for the Roman claim to a province. Perhaps the jealousy which subsequently showed itself in regard to the custody of the hostages[4] may have previously existed between the two commanders, and they may have each consented to a peace disadvantageous to Rome through fear of the other's obtaining the chief laurels if war were entered on.

The struggle for power between Volagases and his son Vardanes seems to have lasted for three years[5]—from A.D. 55 to A.D. 58. Its details are unknown to us; but Volagases must have been successful; and we

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[1] Tacitus (*Ann.* xiii. 9) does not clearly express this; but it seems to follow from his silence as to any recovery of Armenia in A.D. 55, joined to his admission that Tiridates possessed the country in A.D. 58 (ibid. xiii. 34, 37).

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 7.

[3] Ibid. Tacitus is confirmed by the coins, which show that Vardanes was proclaimed at least as early as A.D. 55.

[4] Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 9.

[5] The coins ascribed to Vardanes II. bear the dates ΖΞΤ, ΗΞΤ, and ΘΞΤ, or A.D. 55, 56, and 57–58.

may assume that the pretender, of whom we hear no more, was put to death. No sooner was the contest terminated, than Volagases, feeling that he was now free to act, took a high tone in his communications with Corbulo and Ummidius, and declared that not only must his brother, Tiridates, be left in the undisturbed possession of Armenia, but it must be distinctly understood that he held it as a Parthian, and not as a Roman, feudatory.[1] At the same time Tiridates began to exercise his authority over the Armenians with severity, and especially to persecute those whom he suspected of inclining towards the Romans.[2] Corbulo appears to have felt that it was necessary to atone for his three years of inaction by at length prosecuting the war in earnest. He tightened the discipline of the legions, while he recruited them to their full strength,[3] made fresh friends among the hardy races of the neighbourhood,[4] renewed the Roman alliance with Pharasmanes of Iberia, urged Antiochus of Commagêné to cross the Armenian frontier, and taking the field himself, carried fire and sword over a large portion of the Armenian territory. Volagases sent a contingent of troops to the assistance of his feudatory, but was unable to proceed to his relief in person, owing to the occurrence of a revolt in Hyrcania,[5] which broke out, fortunately for

COIN OF VARDANES II.

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xiii. 34. It would seem that when the hostages were given in A.D. 55, ambassadors were sent to Rome to endeavour to effect some arrangement. It was long before any answer was vouchsafed them (Dio Cass. lxii. 20). When a reply came, it appears to have been to the effect that Tiridates must either relinquish Armenia, or consent to receive it at the hands of the Romans, and hold it as a Roman fief.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xiii. 37.

[3] Ibid. ch. 35.

[4] 'Tunc primum illecti Isichi, gens haud alias socia Romanis.' (Ibid. ch. 37.)

[5] Tacit. *Ann.* l.s.c. Compare xiv. 25, and xv. 1.

the Romans, in the very year that the rebellion of Vardanes was suppressed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Tiridates had recourse to treachery,[1] or that on his treachery failing he continually lost ground, and was at last compelled to evacuate the country and yield the possession of it to the Romans. It is more remarkable that he prolonged his resistance into the third year than that he was unable to continue the struggle to a later date. He lost his capital, Artaxata, in A.D. 58, and Tigranocerta, the second city of Armenia, in A.D. 60. After this he made one further effort from the side of Media,[2] but the attempt was unavailing; and on suffering a fresh defeat, he withdrew altogether from the struggle, whereupon Armenia reverted to the Romans. They entrusted the government to a certain Tigranes, a grandson of Archelaüs, king of Cappadocia, but at the same time greatly diminished the extent of the kingdom by granting portions of it to neighbouring princes. Pharasmanes of Iberia, Polemo of Pontus, Aristobulus of the Lesser Armenia, and Antiochus of Commagêné, received an augmentation of their territories at the expense of the rebel state, which had shown itself incapable of appreciating the blessings of Roman rule and had manifested a decided preference for the Parthians.[3]

But the fate of Armenia, and the position which she was to hold in respect of the two great rivals, Rome and Parthia, were not yet decided. Hitherto Volagases, engaged in a contest with the Hyrcanians and with other neighbouring nations, whereto the flames of war

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xiii. 38–40.

[2] Ibid. xiv. 26.

[3] Tacitus says of the Armenians, 'Ambigua fide utraque arma invitabant, situ terrarum, similitudine morum Parthis propiores, connubiisque permixti ac libertate ignota, *illuc magis ad servitium inclinabant.*' (*Ann.* xiii. 34.)

had spread,[1] had found himself unable to take any personal part in the struggle in which his brother and vassal had been engaged in the west. Now matters in Hyrcania admitted of arrangement, and he was at liberty to give his main attention to Armenian affairs. His presence in the West had become absolutely necessary. Not only was Armenia lost to him, but it had been made a centre from which his other provinces in this quarter might be attacked and harassed. Tigranes, proud of his newly-won crown, and anxious to show himself worthy of it, made constant incursions into Adiabêné, ravaging and harrying the fertile country far and wide.[2] Monobazus, unable to resist him in the field, was beginning to contemplate the transfer of his allegiance to Rome, as the only means of escaping from the evils of a perpetual border war.[3] Tiridates, discontented with the position whereto he found himself reduced, and angry that his brother had not given him more effective support, was loud in his complaints, and openly taxed Volagases with an inertness that bordered on cowardice.[4] Public opinion was inclined to accept and approve the charge; and in Parthia public opinion could not be safely contemned. Volagases found it necessary to win back his subjects' good will by calling a council of the nobility, and making them a formal

[1] We know, unfortunately, nothing of these wars but the mere fact of their occurrence. Some have supposed them to have been stirred up and assisted by Rome (Merivale, *Roman Empire*, vol. vii. p. 23); but there is no evidence of this. On one occasion, a Hyrcanian embassy made its way to Rome, and solicited aid from Nero (Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 25), but apparently without any result. On their return to the East, these envoys were protected by Corbulo, who sent them home by the circuitous route of the Indian Ocean and the Indus (?).

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 1; D. Cass. lxii. 20.

[3] This seems to be implied in the reflection ascribed to Monobazus by Tacitus (l.s.c.), 'Levius servitium apud Romanos deditis quam captis.'

[4] The Latin *ignavia* (the term used by Tiridates in Tacitus) unites these two notions.

address:[1]—'Parthians,' he said, 'when I obtained the first place among you by my brothers ceding their claims, I endeavoured to substitute for the old system of fraternal hatred and contention, a new one of domestic affection and agreement; my brother Pacorus received Media from my hands at once; Tiridates, whom you see now before you, I inducted shortly afterwards into the sovereignty of Armenia, a dignity reckoned the third in the Parthian kingdom. Thus I put my family matters on a peaceful and satisfactory footing. But these arrangements are now disturbed by the Romans, who have never hitherto broken their treaties with us to their profit, and who will now find that they have done so to their ruin. I will not deny that hitherto I have preferred to maintain my right to the territories, which have come to me from my ancestors, by fair dealing rather than by shedding of blood—by negotiation rather than by arms; if, however, I have erred in this and have been weak to delay so long, I will now correct my fault by showing the more zeal. You at any rate have lost nothing by my abstinence; your strength is intact, your glory undiminished; you have added, moreover, to your reputation for valour the credit of moderation—a virtue which not even the highest among men can afford to despise, and which the Gods view with special favour.' Having concluded his speech, he placed a diadem on the brow of Tiridates, proclaiming by this significant act his determination to restore him to the Armenian throne. At the same time he ordered Monæses, a Parthian general,

[1] See Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 2. It has been thought best not to overload this history with the speeches which Greek and Roman writers put into the mouths of their historical characters on all possible occasions. In the present instance an exception is made, on account of the suitability of the sentiments to the occasion.

and Monobazus, the Adiabenian monarch, to take the field and enter Armenia, while he himself with the main strength of the empire advanced towards the Euphrates and threatened Syria with invasion.[1]

The results of the campaign which followed (A.D. 62) scarcely answered to this magnificent opening. Monæses indeed, in conjunction with Monobazus, invaded Armenia, and advancing to Tigranocerta, besieged Tigranes in that city,[2] which upon the destruction of Artaxata by Corbulo,[3] had become the seat of government. Volagases himself proceeded as far as Nisibis,[4] whence he could threaten at the same time Armenia and Syria. The Parthian arms proved, however, powerless to effect any serious impression upon Tigranocerta; and Volagases, being met at Nisibis by envoys from Corbulo, who threatened an invasion of Parthia in retaliation of the Parthian attack upon Armenia, consented to an arrangement. A plague of locusts had spread itself over Upper Mesopotamia, and the consequent scarcity of forage completely paralysed a force which consisted almost entirely of cavalry.[5] Volagases was glad under the circumstances to delay the conflict which had seemed impending, and readily agreed that his troops should suspend the siege of Tigranocerta and withdraw from Armenia on condition that the Romans should at the same time evacuate the province.[6] He would send, he said, ambassadors to Rome who

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[1] Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 2.
[2] Ibid. ch. 4.
[3] See above, p. 270.
[4] Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 5.
[5] 'Imbecillum equitem pabuli inopia: nam exorta vis locustarum ambederat quicquid herbidum aut frondosum' (Tac. l.s.c.). On the ravages committed by these insects in Mesopotamia and the adjacent regions, see *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. pp. 299, 493, 2nd edit.
[6] Tacitus does not expressly mention this condition, but implies it in *Ann.* xv. 6. ('Cur enim exercitum Romanum a Tigranocertis deductum? Cur deserta per otium quæ bello defenderant?')

should arrange with Nero the footing upon which Armenia was to be placed. Meanwhile, until the embassy returned, there should be peace—the Armenians should be left to themselves—neither Rome nor Parthia should maintain a soldier within the limits of the province, and any collision between the armies of the two countries should be avoided.

A pause, apparently of some months' duration, followed. Towards the close of autumn, however, a new general came upon the scene; and a new factor was introduced into the political and military combinations of the period. L. Cæsennius Pætus, a favourite of the Roman emperor, but a man of no capacity, was appointed by Nero to take the main direction of affairs in Armenia, while Corbulo confined himself to the care of Syria, his special province. Corbulo had requested a coadjutor,[1] probably not so much from an opinion that the war would be better conducted by two commanders than by one, as from fear of provoking the jealousy of Nero, if he continued any longer to administer the whole of the East. On the arrival of Pætus, who brought one legion with him, an equitable division of the Roman forces was made between the generals. Each had three legions; and while Corbulo retained the Syrian auxiliaries, those of Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia were attached to the army of Pætus. But no friendly feeling united the leaders. Corbulo was jealous of the rival whom he knew to have been sent out as a check upon him rather than as a help; and Pætus was inclined to despise the slow and temporising policy of the elder chief. The war, according to his views, required to be carried on with more dash and vigour than had hitherto

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 3.

appeared in its conduct—cities should be stormed, he said—the whole country plundered—severe examples made of the guilty. The object of the war also should be changed—instead of setting up shadowy kings, his own aim would be to reduce Armenia into the form of a province.[1]

The truce established in the early summer, when Volagases sent his envoys to Nero, expired in the autumn, on their return without a definite reply;[2] and the Roman commanders at once took the offensive and entered upon an autumn campaign, the second within the space of a year. Corbulo crossed the Euphrates in the face of a large Parthian army, which he forced to retire from the eastern bank of the river by means of military engines worked from ships anchored in mid-stream. He then advanced and occupied a strong position in the hills at a little distance from the river, where he caused his legions to construct an entrenched camp.[3] Pætus, on his part, entered Armenia from Cappadocia with two legions, and passing the Taurus range, ravaged a large extent of country; winter, however, approaching, and the enemy nowhere appearing in force, he led back his troops across the mountains, and, regarding the campaign as finished, wrote a dispatch to Nero boasting of his successes, sent one of his three legions to winter in Pontus, and placed the other two in quarters between the Taurus and the Euphrates, at the same time granting furloughs to as many of the soldiers as chose to apply for them. A large number took advantage of

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[1] This is clearly the meaning of the threat—'Se tributa et leges, et pro umbra regis Romanum jus victis impositurum.' It was not likely to conciliate the Armenians.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 7.

[3] Ibid. ch. 9.

his liberality, preferring no doubt the pleasures and amusements of the Syrian and Cappadocian cities to the hardships of a winter in the Armenian highlands. While matters were in this position, Pætus suddenly heard that Volagases was advancing against him. As once before at an important crisis,[1] so now with the prospect of Armenia as the prize of victory, the Parthians defied the severities of winter and commenced a campaign when their enemy regarded the season for war as over. In this crisis Pætus exhibited an entire unfitness for command. First, he resolved to remain on the defensive in his camp; then, affecting to despise the protection of ramparts and ditches, he gave the order to advance and meet the enemy; finally, after losing a few scouts whom he had sent forward, he hastily retreated and resumed his old position, but at the same time unwisely detached three thousand of his best foot to block the pass of Taurus, through which Volagases was advancing.[2] After some hesitation he was induced to make Corbulo acquainted with his position; but the message which he sent merely stated that he was expecting to be attacked.[3] Corbulo was in no hurry to proceed to his relief, preferring to appear upon the scene at the last moment, when he would be hailed as a saviour.

Volagases, meanwhile, continued his march. The small force left by Pætus to block his progress was easily overpowered, and for the most part destroyed.[4] The castle of Arsamosata,[5] where Pætus had placed

[1] See above, pp. 101–105.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 10. The infantry had the support of some troops of Pannonian horse, which fled, however, on the approach of Volagases.

[3] 'Hostem instare.' (Tacit. l.s.c.)

[4] Ibid. xv. 11.

[5] Arsamosata must not be confounded with Samosata, now Sumeïsat. Samosata was situated on the Euphrates (Strab. xvi. 2, § 3), from which Arsamosata was at least forty (Roman) miles distant (Tac. *Ann.* xv. 16).

his wife and child, and the fortified camp of the legions, were besieged.[1] The Romans were challenged to a battle, but dared not show themselves outside their entrenchments. Having no confidence in their leader, the legionaries despaired and began openly to talk of a surrender. As the danger drew nearer, fresh messengers had been dispatched to Corbulo, and he had been implored to come at his best speed in order to save the poor remnant of a defeated army.[2] That commander was on his march, by way of Commagêné and Cappadocia; it could not be very long before he would arrive; and the supplies in the camp of Pætus were sufficient to have enabled him to hold out for weeks or months.[3] But an unworthy terror had seized both Pætus and his soldiers. Instead of holding out to the last, the alarmed chief proposed negotiations, and the result was that he consented to capitulate. His troops were to be allowed to quit their entrenchments and withdraw from the country, but were to surrender their strongholds and their stores. Armenia was to be completely evacuated by the Romans; and a truce was to be observed and Armenia not again invaded, until a fresh embassy, which Volagases proposed to send to Rome, returned. Moreover, a bridge was to be made by the Romans over the Arsanias, a tributary of the Euphrates, which, as it was of no immediate service to the Parthians, could only be intended as a monument of the Roman defeat.[4] Pætus assented to these terms, and they were carried out; not, however, without some further ignominy to the

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[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 13.

[2] 'Veniret propere; signa et aquilas, et nomen reliquum infelicis exercitus tueretur.' (Ibid. ch. 11.)

[3] Ibid. ch. 16.

[4] Dio Cass. lxii. 21. Compare Tac. *Ann.* xv. 15.

Romans. The Parthians entered the Roman entrenchments before the legionaries had left them, and laid their hands on anything which they recognised as Armenian spoil. They even seized the soldiers' clothes and arms, which were relinquished to them without a struggle, lest resistance should provoke an outbreak.[1] Pætus, once more at liberty, proceeded with unseemly haste to the Euphrates, deserting his wounded and his stragglers,[2] whom he left to the tender mercies of the Armenians. At the Euphrates, he effected a junction with Corbulo, who was but three days' march distant when Pætus so disgracefully capitulated.

The chiefs, when they met, exchanged no cordial greeting. Corbulo complained that he had been induced to make a useless journey, and to weary his troops to no purpose, since without any aid from him the legions might have escaped from their difficulties, by simply waiting until the Parthians had exhausted their stores, when they must have retired. Pætus, anxious to obliterate the memory of his failure, proposed that the combined armies should at once enter Armenia, and over-run it, since Volagases and his Parthians had withdrawn. Corbulo replied coldly—that 'he had no such orders from the Emperor. He had quitted his province to rescue the threatened legions from their peril; now that the peril was past, he must return to Syria, since it was quite uncertain what the enemy might next attempt. It would be hard work for his infantry, tired with the long marches it had made, to keep pace with the Parthian cavalry, which was fresh and would pass rapidly through the plains.' The generals upon this parted. Pætus wintered in Cappadocia; Corbulo returned into Syria, where a demand reached him

[1] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 15.

[2] Ibid. ch. 16.

from Volagases that he would evacuate Mesopotamia. He agreed to do so on the condition that Armenia should be evacuated by the Parthians.[1] To this Volagases consented; since he had re-established Tiridates as king, and the Armenians might be trusted, if left to themselves, to prefer Parthian to Roman ascendancy.

There was now, again, a pause in the war for some months. The envoys sent by Volagases after the capitulation of Pætus reached Rome at the commencement of spring[2] (A.D. 63), and were there at once admitted to an audience. They proposed peace on the terms that Tiridates should be recognised as king of Armenia, but that he should go either to Rome, or to the head quarters of the Roman legions in the East, in order to receive investiture, either from the Emperor or his representative. It was with some difficulty that Nero was brought to believe in the success of Volagases, so entirely had he trusted the dispatches of Pætus, which represented the Romans as triumphant.[3] When the state of affairs was fully understood from the letters of Corbulo and the accounts given by a Roman officer who had accompanied the Parthian envoys, there was no doubt or hesitation as to the course which should be pursued. The Parthian proposals must be rejected. Rome must not make peace immediately upon a disaster, or until she had retrieved her reputation and shown her power by again taking the offensive. Pætus was at once recalled, and the whole direction of the war given to Corbulo, who was intrusted with a wide spreading and extraordinary authority.[4] The Parthian envoys were dismissed, but

[1] Dio Cass. lxii. 22; Tac. *Ann.* xv. 17.
[2] Tac. *Ann.* xv. 24.
[3] Ibid. ch. 25.
[4] Tacitus compares the powers now granted to Corbulo with those

with gifts, which seemed to show that it was not so much their proposals, as the circumstances under which they had been made, that were unpalatable.[1] Another legion was sent to the East; and the semi-independent princes and dynasts were exhorted to support Corbulo with zeal. That commander used his extraordinary powers to draw together, not so much a very large force, as one that could be thoroughly trusted;[2] and collecting his troops at Melitêné (Malatiyeh), made his arrangements for a fresh invasion.

Penetrating into Armenia by the road formerly followed by Lucullus, Corbulo, with three legions, and probably the usual proportion of allies—an army of about 30,000 men—advanced against the combined Armenians and Parthians under Tiridates and Volagases, freely offering battle, and at the same time taking vengeance, as he proceeded, on the Armenian nobles who had been especially active in opposing Tigranes, the late Roman puppet-king.[3] His march led him near the spot where the capitulation of Pætus had occurred in the preceding winter; and it was while he was in this neighbourhood that envoys from the enemy met him with proposals for an accommodation. Corbulo, who had never shown himself anxious to push matters to an extremity, readily accepted the overtures. The site of the camp of Pætus was chosen for the place of meeting; and there, accompanied by twenty horsemen each, Tiridates and the Roman general

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which were entrusted to Pompey by the Gabinian law. (See on this Merivale, *Roman Empire*, vol. i. p. 66.)

[1] Dio attributes to Nero at this time the proposal of exactly those conditions of peace which he rejected (D. Cass. lxii. 22). He is to be corrected from Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 25).

[2] See Tac. *Ann.* xv. 26, where there is mention of his obtaining picked cohorts from Egypt and Illyricum.

[3] Ibid. ch. 27.

held an interview.[1] The terms proposed and agreed upon were the same that Nero had rejected; and thus the Parthians could not but be satisfied, since they obtained all for which they had asked. Corbulo, on the other hand, was content to have made the arrangement on Armenian soil, while he was at the head of an intact and unblemished army, and held possession of an Armenian district; so that the terms could not seem to have been extorted by fear, but rather to have been allowed as equitable. He also secured the immediate performance of a ceremony at which Tiridates divested himself of the regal ensigns and placed them at the foot of the statue of Nero; and he took security for the performance of the promise that Tiridates should go to Rome and receive his crown from the hands of Nero, by requiring and obtaining one of his daughters as a hostage. In return, he readily undertook that Tiridates should be treated with all proper honour during his stay at Rome, and on his journeys to and from Italy, assuring Volagases, who was anxious on these points, that Rome regarded only the substance, and made no account of the mere show and trappings of power.[2]

The arrangement thus made was honestly executed. After a delay of above two years,[3] for which it is difficult to account, Tiridates set out upon his journey. He was accompanied by his wife, by a number of noble youths, among whom were sons of Volagases and of Monobazus, and by an escort of three thousand Parthian cavalry.[4] The long cavalcade passed, like a

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[1] Ibid. ch. 28.

[2] Ibid. chs. 29-31.

[3] The arrangement was made in the summer of A.D. 63. Tiridates did not make his appearance at Rome till the spring of A.D. 66. (See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 48.)

[4] Dio Cass. lxiii. 1, 2.

magnificent triumphal procession, through two-thirds of the Empire, and was everywhere warmly welcomed and sumptuously entertained. Each city which lay upon its route was decorated to receive it; and the loud acclaims of the multitudes expressed their satisfaction at the novel spectacle. The riders made the whole journey, except the passage of the Hellespont, by land, proceeding through Thrace and Illyricum to the head of the Adriatic,[1] and then descending the peninsula. Their entertainment was furnished at the expense of the state, and is said to have cost the treasury 800,000 sesterces (about 6,250*l.*) a day:[2] this outlay was continued for nine months, and must have amounted in the aggregate to above a million and a half of our money. The first interview of the Parthian prince with his nominal sovereign was at Naples, where Nero happened to be staying. According to the ordinary etiquette of the Roman court, Tiridates was requested to lay aside his sword before approaching the Emperor; but this he declined to do; and the difficulty seemed serious until a compromise was suggested, and he was allowed to approach wearing his weapon, after it had first been carefully fastened to the scabbard by nails. He then drew near, bent one knee to the ground, interlaced his hands, and made obeisance, at the same time saluting the Emperor as his 'lord.'[3]

The ceremony of the investiture was performed afterwards at Rome. On the night preceding, the whole city was illuminated and decorated with garlands; the Forum, as morning approached, was filled with 'the

[1] This is the meaning of Dio (lxiii. 7), where ὑπὲρ τὸν Ἰόνιον has been generally translated 'across the Adriatic,' instead of 'above' or 'round the head of the Adriatic,' which is the true meaning.

[2] Sueton. *Neron.* § 30. Dio agrees (lxiii. 2).

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

people,' arranged in their several tribes, clothed in white robes and bearing boughs of laurel; the Prætorians, in their splendid arms, were drawn up in two lines from the further extremity of the Forum to the Rostra, to maintain the avenue of approach clear; all the roofs of the buildings on every side were thronged with crowds of spectators; at break of day Nero arrived in the attire appropriated to triumphs, accompanied by the members of the Senate and his body-guard, and took his seat on the Rostra in a curule chair. Tiridates and his suite were then introduced between the two long lines of soldiers; and the prince, advancing to the Rostra, made an oration, which (as reported by Dio) was of a sufficiently abject character.[1] Nero responded proudly; and then the Armenian prince, ascending the Rostra by a way constructed for the purpose, and sitting at the feet of the Roman Emperor, received from his hand, after his speech had been interpreted to the assembled Romans, the coveted diadem, the symbol of Oriental sovereignty.[2]

After a stay of some weeks, or possibly months, at Rome, during which he was entertained by Nero with extreme magnificence, Tiridates returned, across the Adriatic and through Greece and Asia Minor,[3] to his own land. The circumstances of his journey and his reception involved a concession to Rome of all that could be desired in the way of formal and verbal acknowledgment. The substantial advantage, however, remained with the Parthians. The Romans,

[1] According to this author, Tiridates said—'Master, I am a descendant of Arsaces, a brother of the kings Vologasus and Pacorus; but I am thy slave. I have come hither to thee, who art my God, to worship thee, as I would Mithras; and from henceforth my fate will be whatever thou makest it. For thou art my Fate and my Fortune.' (D. Cass. lxiii. 5.)

[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.; Sueton. *Ner.* § 13.

[3] Dio Cass. lxiii. 7.

both in the East and at the capital, were flattered by a show of submission; but the Orientals must have concluded that the long struggle had terminated in an acknowledgment by Rome of Parthia as the stronger power. Ever since the time of Lucullus, Armenia had been the object of contention between the two states, both of which had sought, as occasion served, to place upon the throne its own nominees. Recently the rival powers had at one and the same time brought forward rival claimants; and the very tangible issue had been raised—Was Tigranes or Tiridates to be king? When the claims of Tigranes were finally, with the consent of Rome, set aside, and those of Tiridates allowed, the real point in dispute was yielded by the Romans. A Parthian, the actual brother of the reigning Parthian king, was permitted to rule the country which Rome had long deemed her own. It could not be doubted that he would rule it in accordance with Parthian interests. His Roman investiture was a form which he had been forced to go through; what effect could it have on him in the future, except to create a feeling of soreness? The arms of Volagases had been the real force which had placed him upon the throne; and to those arms he must have looked to support him in case of an emergency. Thus Armenia was in point of fact relinquished to Parthia at the very time when it was nominally replaced under the sovereignty of the Romans.[1]

There is much doubt as to the time at which Volagases I. ceased to reign. The classical writers give no

[1] Writers on Roman history have not always seen this. But Dean Merivale well observes, in concluding his notice of the events—'While Tiridates did homage for his kingdom to Nero, he *was suffered to place himself really under the protection of Vologesus*' (*Roman Empire*, vol. vii. p. 26).

indication of the death of any Parthian king between the year A.D. 51, when they record the demise of Vonones II., and about the year A.D. 90, when they speak of a certain Pacorus as occupying the throne.[1] Moreover, during this interval, whenever they have occasion to mention the reigning Parthian monarch, they always give him the name of Volagases.[2] Hence it has been customary among writers on Parthian history to assign to Volagases I. the entire period between A.D. 51 and A.D. 90—a space of thirty-nine years.[3] Recently, however, the study of the Parthian coins has shown absolutely that Pacorus began to reign at least as early as A.D. 78,[4] while it has raised a suspicion that the space between A.D. 51 and A.D. 78 was shared between two kings,[5] one of whom reigned from A.D. 51 to about A.D. 62, and the other from about A.D. 62 to A.D. 78. It has been proposed to call these kings respectively Volagases I. and Artabanus IV.,[6] or Volagases I. and Volagases II.,[7] and Parthian history has been written on this basis;[8] but it is confessed

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[1] Pacorus is mentioned as king of Parthia by Martial in an epigram written under Domitian, probably towards the close of his reign, which was from A.D. 81 to A.D. 96. (Mart. *Epig.* ix. 36, 3.) Clinton dates the epigram A.D. 94 or 95 (*F. R.* vol. i. p. 79).

[2] See Sueton. *Ner.* § 57; *Vesp.* § 6; *Domit.* § 2; Tac. *Hist.* iv. 51; Dio Cass. lxvi. 11; Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 5, § 2, and 7, § 2.

[3] Vaillant, *Arsacid. Imper.* pp. 249–292; Heeren, *Manual of Ancient History*, p. 303, E.T.; Plate in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*, vol. i. pp. 358, 359.

[4] A coin of Pacorus, *bearing his name*, has the date ΘΠΤ Δαισίου, or June, A.D. 78.

[5] The coins which run from ΔΞΤ (A.D. 52) to ΗΠΤ (A.D. 76) are thought to present two distinct types of face, one of which is found always before A.D. 62, and the other always after that date. This seems to be the opinion of the best numismatologists, as MM. Longperier and De Bartholomei, Mr. Lindsay, and the late Mr. De Salis. For my own part, I confess I am unable to detect any clear difference.

[6] Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, p. 87.

[7] In the British Museum Collection, arranged by the late Mr. De Salis, these names are adopted.

[8] By Mr. Lindsay (*History and Coinage*, pp. 71–101).

that the entire absence of any intimation by the classical writers that there was any change of monarch in this space, or that the Volagases of whom they speak as a contemporary of Vespasian was any other than the adversary of Corbulo, is a very great difficulty in the way of this view being accepted; and it is suggested that the two kings which the coins indicate, may have been contemporary monarchs reigning in different parts of Parthia.[1] To such a theory there can be no objection. The Parthian coins distinctly show the existence under the later Arsacidæ of numerous pretenders, or rivals to the true monarch, of whom we have no other trace. In the time of Volagases I. there was (we know) a revolt in Hyrcania,[2] which was certainly not suppressed as late as A.D. 75. The king who has been called Artabanus IV. or Volagases II. may have maintained himself in this region, while Volagases I. continued to rule in the Western provinces and to be the only monarch known to the Romans and the Jews. If this be the true account of the matter, we may regard Volagases I. as having most probably reigned from A.D. 51 to about A.D. 78—a space of twenty-seven years.

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[1] Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, p. 87.

[2] See above, pp. 269-271. The revolt appears to have broken out in A.D. 58 (Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 37). We hear of it as continuing in A.D. 60 (ibid. xiv. 25), and again in A.D. 62 (ibid. xv. 1). From this time we have no distinct mention of it until A.D. 75, when it appears from Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* vii. 7, § 4) that the revolt had succeeded, and that a king ruled in Hyrcania who was completely independent.

CHAPTER XVII.

Results of the Establishment of Tiridates in Armenia. Long period of Peace between Parthia and Rome. Obscurity of Parthian History at this time. Relations of Volagases I. with Vespasian. Invasion of Western Asia by the Alani. Death of Volagases I. and Character of his Reign. Accession and Long Reign of Pacorus. Relations of Pacorus with Decebalus of Dacia. Internal Condition of Parthia during his Reign. Death of Pacorus and Accession of Chosroës.

'Longa concordia quietus Oriens . . . tantum adversus Parthos minæ.'
Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 6.

THE establishment of Tiridates as king of Armenia, with the joint consent of Volagases and Nero, inaugurated a period of peace between the two Empires of Rome and Parthia, which exceeded half a century.[1] This result was no doubt a fortunate one for the inhabitants of Western Asia; but it places the modern historian of the Parthians at a disadvantage. Hitherto the classical writers, in relating the wars of the Syro-Macedonians and the Romans, have furnished materials for Parthian history, which, if not as complete as we might wish, have been at any rate fairly copious and satisfactory. Now, for the space of half a century, we are left without anything like a consecutive narrative, and are thrown upon scattered and isolated notices, which can form only a most incomplete and disjointed narrative. The reign of Volagases I. appears to have continued for about twelve years after the visit of Tiridates to Rome;[2] and no

[1] The peace dates from the year A.D. 62, when the arrangement was made with Corbulo (see above, p. 280-281). It was not infringed until the great expedition of Trajan in A.D. 115.

[2] See above, p. 282.

more than three or four events are known as having fallen into this interval. Our knowledge of the reign of Pacorus is yet more scanty. But as the business of the workman is simply to make the best use that he can of his materials, such a sketch of this dark period as the notices which have come down to us allow, will now be attempted.

When the troubles which followed upon the death of Nero shook the Roman world, and after the violent ends of Galba and Otho, the governor of Judæa, Vespasian, resolved to become a candidate for the imperial power (A.D. 69), Volagases was at once informed by envoys of the event, and was exhorted to maintain towards the new monarch the same peaceful attitude which he had now for seven years observed towards his predecessors.[1] Volagases not only complied with the request, but sent ambassadors in return to Vespasian, while he was still at Alexandria (A.D. 70), and offered to put at his disposal a body of forty thousand Parthian cavalry.[2] The circumstances of his position allowed Vespasian to decline this magnificent proposal, and to escape the odium which would have attached to the employment of foreign troops against his countrymen. His generals in Italy had by this time carried all before them; and he was able, after thanking the Parthian monarch, to inform him that peace was restored to the Roman world, and that he had therefore no need of auxiliaries.[3] In the same friendly spirit in which he had made this offer, Volagases, in the next year (A.D. 71), sent envoys to Titus at Zeugma, who presented to him the Parthian king's congratulations on his victorious conclusion of the Jewish war, and begged

[1] Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 82.
[2] Sueton. *Vesp.* § 6; Tac. *Hist.* iv. 51.
[3] Tacit. *Hist.* l.s.c.

his acceptance of a crown of gold. The polite attention was courteously received; and before allowing them to return to their master, the young prince hospitably entertained the Parthian messengers at a banquet.[1]

Soon after this, circumstances occurred in the border state of Commagêné which threatened a rupture of the friendly relations that had hitherto subsisted between Volagases and Vespasian.[2] Cæsennius Pætus, proconsul of Syria, the unsuccessful general in the late Armenian war, informed Vespasian, early in A.D. 72, that he had discovered a plot, by which Commagêné, one of the Roman subject kingdoms, was to be detached from the Roman alliance, and made over to the Parthians. Antiochus, the aged monarch, and his son Epiphanes were, according to Pætus, both concerned in the treason; and the arrangement with the Parthians was, he said, actually concluded. It would be well to nip the evil in the bud. If the transfer of territory once took place, a most serious disturbance of the Roman power would follow. Commagêné lay west of the Euphrates; and its capital city, Samosata (the modern Sumeïsat), commanded one of the points where the great river was most easily crossed; so that, if the Parthians held it, they would have a ready access at all times to the Roman provinces of Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Syria, with a perfectly safe retreat. These arguments had weight with Vespasian, who seems to have had entire confidence in Pætus, and induced him to give the proconsul full liberty to act as he thought best. Thus empowered, Pætus at once invaded Commagêné in force, and meeting at first with

[1] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 5, § 2. | [2] Ibid. vii. 7, § 1.

no resistance (for the Commagênians were either innocent or unprepared), succeeded in occupying Samosata by a *coup de main*. The aged king wished to yield everything without a blow; but his two sons, Epiphanes and Callinicus, were not to be restrained. They took arms, and at the head of such a force as they could hastily muster, met Pætus in the field, and fought a battle with him which lasted the whole day, and ended without advantage to either side. But the decision of Antiochus was not to be shaken; he refused to countenance his sons' resistance, and quitting Commagêné, passed with his wife and daughters into the Roman province of Cilicia, where he took up his abode at Tarsus. The spirit of the Commagênians could not hold out against this defection; the force collected began to disperse; and the young princes found themselves forced to fly, and to seek a refuge in Parthia, which they reached with only ten horsemen.[1] Volagases received them with the courtesy and hospitality due to their royal rank; but as he had given them no help in the struggle, so now he made no effort to reinstate them. All the exertion to which he could be brought was to write a letter on their behalf to Vespasian,[2] in which he probably declared them guiltless of the charges that had been brought against them by Pætus. Vespasian, at any rate, seems to have become convinced of their innocence; for though he allowed Commagêné to remain a Roman province, he

[1] Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 7, § 2.

[2] This may possibly have been the letter to which Dio Cassius alludes (lxvi. 11), wherein Volagases addressed the Roman emperor thus:—'Arsaces, King of Kings, to Flavius Vespasianus, sends greeting'; whereto Vespasian was content to reply, with very palpable irony, 'Flavius Vespasianus to Arsaces, King of Kings, sends greeting.' It is, however, on the whole more likely that the letter with this heading was provoked by the refusal of Vespasian to help the Parthian monarch against the Alani.

permitted the two princes with their father to reside at Rome, assigned the ex-monarch an ample revenue, and gave the family an honourable status.

It was probably not more than two or three years after the events above narrated,[1] that Volagases found himself in circumstances which impelled him to send a petition to the Roman Emperor for help. The Alani, a Scythian people, who had once dwelt near the Tanais[2] and the Lake Mæotis, or Sea of Azof, but who must now have lived further to the East, had determined on a great predatory invasion of the countries west of the Caspian Gates, and having made alliance with the Hyrcanians, who were in possession of that important pass,[3] had poured into Media through it, driven King Pacorus to the mountains, and over-run the whole of the open country. From hence they

[1] A.D. 75.

[2] The Alani are first mentioned by Dionysius the Geographer (B.C. 30–10), who joins them with the Daci and the Tauri (*Perieg.* 305, 306), and again places them between the latter and the Agathyrsi (308, 309). A similar position (in the south of Russia in Europe, the modern Ukraine) is assigned to them by Pliny (*H. N.* iv. 12, § 25) and Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* vii. 7, § 4). Seneca (*Thyest.* 629) places them further west, upon the Ister. Ptolemy has two bodies of Alani, one in the position above described, the other in Scythia within the Imaus, north and partly east of the Caspian (*Geograph.* ii. 14, iii. 5, vi. 14). It must have been from these last, the successors, and, according to some (Amm. Marc. xxxi. 2), the descendants of the ancient Massagetæ, that the Alani came who attacked Pacorus and Tiridates. Their alliance with the Hyrcanians shows that they rounded the south-east corner of the Caspian, and their passage through the Gates into Media and Armenia equally indicates that they invaded those countries *from the East*. The ethnology of the Alani has been much disputed. Some regard them as Medes, some as Teutons, others as Turks or Fins. It is in favour of their Finnish origin that Alani and Rhox-alani are significant in Finnish, Alani (*alain*) meaning 'men,' and Rhox-alani (*ruots-alain*) 'red-haired men.' A special connexion is traced between the Alani and the Os or Osethi of the Caucasus.

[3] This implies a development of Hyrcanian power not otherwise recorded, but in itself not improbable. The 'Gates' were beyond the limits of Hyrcania Proper, but closely adjoined upon it, and would be likely to fall into the hands of the power which held the adjacent mountain-tract.

had passed on into Armenia, defeated Tiridates in a battle, and almost succeeded in capturing him by means of a lasso.[1] Volagases, whose subject-kings were thus rudely treated, and who might naturally expect his own proper territories to be next attacked, sent in this emergency a request to Vespasian for aid. He asked moreover that the forces put at his disposal should be placed under the command of either Titus or Domitian,[2] probably not so much from any value that he set on their military talents, as from a conviction that if a member of the Imperial family was sent, the force which accompanied him would be considerable. We are told that the question, whether help should be given or no, was seriously discussed at Rome, and that Domitian was exceedingly anxious that the troops should go, and begged that he might be their commander. But Vespasian was disinclined for any expenditure of which he did not recognise the necessity, and disliked all perilous adventure. His own refusal of extraneous support, when offered by his rival, rendered it possible for him to reject Volagases' request without incurring the charge of ingratitude. The Parthians were therefore left to their own resources; and the result seems to have been, that the invaders, after ravaging and harrying Media and Armenia at their pleasure, carried off a vast number of prisoners and an enormous booty into their own country.[3]

Soon after this, Volagases must have died. The coins of his successor[4] commence in June, A.D. 78, and

[1] Joseph. *B. J.* vii. 7, § 2. On the use of the lasso by Asiatics, see Herod. vii. 85; Pausan. i. 21, § 8; Suidas, *ad voc.* Σειρά, &c.

[2] Sueton. *Domit.* § 2. Compare Dio Cass. lxvi. 15.

[3] Joseph. l.s.c.

[4] The earliest known coin of Pacorus bears date ΘΠΤ, Δαισίου. It has the legend [Π]ακόρο . . . . δικαίου [ἐ]πιφανου[ς φιλε]λληνο[ς].

thus he cannot have outlived by more than three years the irruption of the Alani. If he died, as is most probable, in the spring of A.D. 78, his reign would have covered the space of twenty-seven years. It was an eventful one for Parthia. It brought the second period of struggle with the Romans to an end[1] by a compromise which gave to Rome the shadow and to Parthia the substance of victory. And it saw the first completed disintegration of the Empire in the successful revolt of Hyrcania—an event of evil portent. Volagases was undoubtedly a monarch of considerable ability. He conducted with combined prudence and firmness the several campaigns against Corbulo; he proved himself far superior to Pætus; exposed to attacks in various quarters from many different enemies, he repulsed all foreign invaders, and, *as against them*, maintained intact the ancient dominions of the Arsacidæ. He practically added Armenia to the Empire. Everywhere success attended him, except against a domestic foe. Hyrcania seceded during his reign, and it may be doubted whether Parthia ever afterwards recovered it. An example was thus set of successful Arian revolt against the hitherto irresistible Turanians, which may have tended in no slight degree to produce the insurrection which eventually subverted the Parthian Empire.

The successor of Volagases I. was Pacorus, whom most writers on Parthian history have regarded as his son.[2] There is, however, no evidence of this relation-

[1] The first period of struggle, in which either state sought to conquer territory from the other, lasted from B.C. 55 to 36, and was succeeded by seventy years of peace—from B.C. 35 to A.D. 35. The second, for supremacy over Armenia, commenced A.D. 35, and terminated A.D. 63 by Rome's acceptance of Tiridates. This was followed by a peace which lasted fifty-three years—from A.D. 63 to A.D. 115.

[2] Vaillant, *Arsac. Imp.* p. 296; Plate in Smith's *Biogr. Dict.*, vol. i. p. 359; Lewis, *History of the Par-*

ship; and the chief reason for regarding Pacorus as belonging even to the same branch of the Arsacidæ with Volagases I. is his youth at his accession, indicated by the beardless head upon his early coins,

Coin of Pacorus II.

which is no doubt in favour of his having been a near relation of the preceding king. The Parthian coins show that his reign continued *at least* till A.D. 93; it may have lasted considerably longer, for the earliest date on any coin of Chosroës is Ær. Seleuc. 421, or A.D. 110. The accession of Chosroës has been conjecturally assigned to A.D. 108, which would allow to Pacorus the long reign of thirty years. Of this interval it can only be said that, so far as our knowledge goes, it was almost wholly uneventful. We know absolutely nothing of this Pacorus, except that he gave encouragement to a person who pretended to be Nero; that he enlarged and beautified Ctesiphon;[1] that he held friendly communications with Decebalus, the great Dacian chief, who was successively the adversary of Domitian and Trajan; and that he sold the sovereignty of Osrhoëné at a high price to the Edessene prince who was contemporary with him. The Pseudo-Nero in question appears to have taken refuge with the Parthians in the year A.D. 89, and to have been demanded as an impostor by Domitian.[2] Pacorus was at first inclined to

thian Empire, p. 318. Lindsay (*History and Coinage*, p. 101) suggests that he was, not the son of Volagases I., but his grandson.

[1] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6. 'Ctesiphon, quam . . . rex Pacorus, incolarum viribus amplificatam et mœnibus, Græco indito nomine, Persidis effecit specimen summum.'

[2] Sueton. *Neron.* § 57. 'Denique, cum post viginti annos, adolescente me, extitisset conditionis incertæ, qui se Neronem esse jactaret, tam favorabile nomen ejus apud Parthos fuit, ut vehementer adjutus, et vix

protect, and even to assist him, but after a while was induced to give him up, probably by a threat of hostilities. The communication with the Dacian chief was most likely earlier. The Dacians, in one of those incursions into Mœsia which they made during the first years of Domitian, took captive a certain Callidromus,[1] a Greek, if we may judge by his name, slave to a Roman of some rank, named Liberius Maximus. This prisoner Decebalus (we are told) sent as a present to Pacorus, in whose service and favour he remained for a number of years. This circumstance, insignificant enough in itself, acquires an interest from the indication which it gives of intercommunication between the enemies of Rome, even when they were separated by vast spaces, and might have been thought to have been wholly ignorant of each other's existence. Decebalus can scarcely have been drawn to Pacorus by any other attraction than that which always subsists between enemies of any great dominant power. He must have looked to the Parthian monarch as a friend who might make a diversion on his behalf upon occasion; and that monarch, by accepting his gift, must be considered to have shown a willingness to accept this kind of relation.

The sale of the Osrhoëne territory to Abgarus by Pacorus[2] was not a fact of much consequence. It may indicate an exhaustion of his treasury, resulting from the expenditure of vast sums on the enlargement and adornment of the capital, but otherwise it has no bearing on the general condition of the Empire.

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redditus sit.' The 'twenty years' of this passage, dating from the death of Nero, A.D. 69, fix the appearance of *this* Pseudo-Nero to A.D. 89, the ninth year of Domitian.

[1] Plin. *Ep.* x. 16. 'Callidromum . . . captum a Susago *in Mœsia*, &c.'

[2] Suidas ad voc. *ὠνητή*.

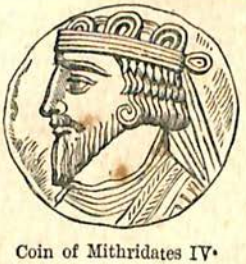
Perhaps the Parthian feudatories generally paid a price for their investiture. If they did not, and the case of Abgarus was peculiar, still it does not appear that his purchase at all altered his position as a Parthian subject. It was not until they transferred their allegiance to Rome that the Osrhoëne princes struck coins, or otherwise assumed the status of kings. Up to the time of M. Aurelius they continued just as much subject to Parthia as before, and were far from acquiring a position of independence.

There is reason to believe that the reign of Pacorus was a good deal disturbed by internal contentions. We hear of an Artabanus[1] as king of Parthia in A.D. 79; and the Parthian coins of about this period present us with two very marked types of head, both of them quite unlike that of Pacorus,[2] which must be those of monarchs who either contended with Pacorus for the crown, or ruled contemporaneously with him over other portions of the Parthian Empire. Again, towards the close of Pacorus's reign, and early in that of his recognised successor, Chosroës, a monarch called Mithridates is shown by the coins to have borne sway

[1] Zonaras, p. 578, B. The date is fixed by the mention immediately afterwards of the great eruption of Vesuvius in the reign of Titus, which belongs to A.D. 79.

[2] One of these, of whom there is a coin in the Brit. Mus. dated BQT, or A.D. 80, 81, is thought by some to be the Artabanus of Zonaras. The other, whose head is entirely different, has been identified with the Volagases who succeeded Chosroës.

Early Coin of Volagases II.



Coin of Mithridates IV.

for at least six years—from A.D. 107 to 113. This monarch commenced the practice of placing a Semitic legend upon his coins,[1] which would seem to imply that he ruled in the western rather than the eastern provinces. The probability appears, on the whole, to be that the disintegration which has been already noticed as having commenced under Volagases I. was upon the increase. Three or four monarchs were ruling together in different portions of the Parthian world, each claiming to be the true Arsaces, and using the full titles of Parthian sovereignty upon his coins. The Romans knew but little of these divisions and contentions,[2] their dealings being only with the Arsacid who reigned at Ctesiphon and bore sway over Mesopotamia and Adiabêné.

Pacorus must have died about A.D. 108, or a little later. He left behind him two sons, Exedares and Parthamasiris,[3] but neither of these two princes was allowed to succeed him. The Parthian Megistanes assigned the crown to Chosroës, the brother of their late monarch, perhaps regarding Exedares and Parthamasiris as too young to administer the government of Parthia satisfactorily. If they knew, as perhaps they did,[4] that the long period of peace with Rome was

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[1] This legend (𐤀𐤌𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕𐤓𐤋𐤀𐤌𐤕𐤓𐤃) is read as מתרדת מלכא or *Mitradat malcha*, i.e. 'King Mithridates.' (See *Numism. Chron.* vol. xi. Pl. vii. No. 4.) Legends in the same character are frequent on the coins of the later Parthian kings.

[2] We have, however, an indication of them in Dio Cassius, who, speaking of the slight resistance offered to Trajan in his advance upon Babylon, says, 'There were few to hinder him, since the power of Parthia had been brought low *through the civil wars*, and there were still unsubdued rebellions' (lxviii. 26).

[3] Dio Cass. lxviii. 17.

[4] Pacorus had had occasion before his death to make various complaints to Trajan (Suidas ad voc. ἐπίκλημα). This would imply that Rome had already taken an aggressive attitude, and was preparing the way for a rupture.

coming to an end, and that they might expect shortly to be once more attacked by their old enemy, they might well desire to have upon the throne a prince of ripe years and approved judgment. A raw youth would certainly have been quite unfit to cope with the age, the experience, and the military genius of Trajan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Reign of Chosroës. General condition of Oriental Affairs gives a handle to Trajan. Trajan's Schemes of Conquest. Embassy of Chosroës to Trajan fails. Great Expedition of Trajan. Campaign of A.D. 115. *Campaign of* A.D. 116. *Death of Trajan, and relinquishment of his Parthian Conquests by Hadrian. Interview of Chosroës with Hadrian. Its Consequences. Death of Chosroës and Accession of Volagases II.*

'Ad ortum solis, cunctæ gentes quæ inter Indum et Euphratem amnes inclytos sunt, concussæ bello.'—Aurel. Vict. *Hist.* § 13.

THE general state of Oriental affairs at the accession of Chosroës seems to have been the following. Upon the demise of Tiridates (about A.D. 100),[1] Pacorus had established upon the Armenian throne one of his sons, named Exedares, or Axidares, and this prince had thenceforth reigned as king of Armenia without making any application to Rome for investiture, or acknowledging in any way the right of the Romans to interfere with the Armenian succession.[2] Trajan, sufficiently occupied in the West,[3] had borne this insult. When, however, in A.D. 114, the subjugation of Dacia was completed, and the Roman Emperor found his hands free, he resolved to turn his arms towards Asia, and to make the Armenian difficulty a pretext for a

[1] The date here is uncertain; and it is even not quite clear whether Exedares was placed on the Armenian throne by Pacorus or Chosroës. It seems, however, scarcely likely that Tiridates should have lived much beyond A.D. 100, or that Chosroës, if he had established Exedares, should have so readily deposed him.

[2] Dio Cass. lxviii. 17.

[3] The Dacian War occupied Trajan from A.D. 101 to A.D. 106. The year A.D. 107 was spent in securing possession of the Dacian territory. (Clinton, *F. R.*, vol. i. pp. 88-94.)

great military expedition, designed to establish unmistakably the supremacy of Rome throughout the East. The condition of the East at once called for the attention of Rome, and was eminently favourable for the extension of her influence at this period. Disintegrating forces were everywhere at work, tending to produce a confusion and anarchy which invited the interposition of a great power, and rendered resistance to such a power difficult. Christianity, which was daily spreading itself more and more widely, acted as a dissolvent upon the previously-existing forms of society, loosening the old ties, dividing man from man by an irreconcilable division, and not giving much indication as yet of its power to combine and unite. Judaism, embittered by persecution, had from a nationality become a conspiracy; and the disaffected adherents of the Mosaic system, dispersed through all the countries of the East, formed an explosive element in the population which involved the constant danger of a catastrophe.[1] The Parthian political system was also, as already remarked, giving symptoms of breaking up. Those bonds which for two centuries and a half had sufficed to hold together a heterogeneous kingdom extending from the Euphrates to the Indus, and from the Oxus to the Southern Ocean, were beginning to grow weak, and the Parthian Empire appeared to be falling to pieces. There seemed to be at once a call and an opportunity for a fresh arrangement of the East, for the introduction of a unifying power, such as Rome recognised in her own administrative system, which should compel the crumbling atoms of the Oriental world once more into cohesion.

[1] Some good remarks on these subjects will be found in Dean Merivale's *Roman Empire*, vol. viii. pp. 134–153.

To this call Trajan responded. His vast ambition had been whetted, rather than satiated, by the conquest of a barbarous nation, and a single, not very valuable, province. In the East he might hope to add to the Roman State half a dozen countries of world-wide repute, the seats of ancient empires, the old homes of Asiatic civilisation, countries associated with the immortal names of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus, Cyrus, Darius, and Alexander. The career of Alexander had an attraction for him, which he was fain to confess;[1] and he pleased himself by imitating, though he could not hope, at his age, to equal it. His Eastern expedition was conceived very much in the same spirit as that of Crassus;[2] but he possessed the military ability in which the Triumvir was deficient, and the enemy whom he had to attack was grown less formidable.

Trajan commenced his Eastern expedition in A.D. 114, seven years after the close of the Dacian War. He was met at Athens in the autumn of that year by envoys from Chosroës, who brought him presents, and made representations which, it was hoped, would induce him to consent to peace.[3] Chosroës stated that he had deposed his nephew, Exedares, the Armenian prince whose conduct had been offensive to Rome; and proposed that, as the Armenian throne was thereby vacant, it should be filled by the appointment of Parthamasiris, Exedares' brother. This prince would be willing, he said, to receive investiture at the hands of Rome; and he requested that Trajan would transmit to him the symbol of sovereignty. The accommodation suggested would have re-established the relations of the two countries towards Armenia on the basis on

[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 29.
[2] See above, p. 150.
[3] Dio Cass. lxviii. 17.

which they had been placed by the agreement between Volagases and Nero. It would have saved the credit of Rome, while it secured to Parthia the substantial advantage of retaining Armenia under her authority and protection. Trajan might well have consented to it, had his sole object been to reclaim the rights or to vindicate the honour of his country. But he had distinctly made up his mind to aim, not at the re-establishment of any former condition of things, but at the placing of matters in the East on an entirely new footing.[1] He therefore gave the ambassadors of Chosroës a cold reception, declined the gifts offered him, and replied to the proposals of accommodation, that the friendship of kings was to be measured by deeds rather than by words—he would therefore say nothing, but when he reached Syria, would act in a becoming manner.[2] The envoys of the Parthian monarch were obliged to return with this unsatisfactory answer; and Chosroës had to wait and see what interpretation it would receive from the course of events.

During the later months of autumn, Trajan advanced from Athens to Antioch.[3] At that luxurious capital, he mustered his forces and prepared for the campaign of the ensuing year. Abgarus, the Osrhoëne prince who had lately purchased his sovereignty from Pacorus,[4] sent an embassy to him in the course of the winter, with presents and an offer of friendship.[5] Parthamasiris also entered into communications with him, first assuming the royal title, and then, when his letter received no answer, dropping it, and addressing

[1] Dio calls the Armenian matter a mere pretext, and Trajan's love of glory the real cause of the war (lxviii. 17).

[2] *Πάντα τὰ προσήκοντα ποίησει* (ibid. l.s.c.)

[3] Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 98.

[4] See above, p. 294.

[5] Dio Cass. lxviii. 18.

the Roman Emperor as a mere private person.[1] Upon this act of self-humiliation, negotiations were commenced. Parthamasiris was encouraged to present himself at the Roman camp, and was given to understand that he would there receive from Trajan, as Tiridates had received from Nero, the emblem of sovereignty and permission to rule Armenia. The military preparations were, however, continued. Vigorous measures were taken to restore the discipline of the Syrian legions, which had suffered through the long tranquillity of the East and the enervating influence of the climate.[2] With the spring Trajan commenced his march. Ascending the Euphrates to Samosata, and receiving as he advanced the submission of various semi-independent dynasts and princes, he took possession of Satala and Elegeia, Armenian cities on or near the Euphrates, and establishing himself at the last-named place, waited for the arrival of Parthamasiris. That prince shortly rode into the Roman camp, attended by a small retinue; and a meeting was arranged, at which the Parthian, in the sight of the whole Roman army, took the diadem from his brows and laid it at the feet of the Roman Emperor, expecting to have it at once restored to him. But Trajan had determined otherwise. He made no movement; and the army, prepared no doubt for the occasion, shouted with all their might, saluting him anew as Imperator, and congratulating him on his 'bloodless victory.'[3] Parthamasiris felt that he had fallen into a trap, and would gladly have turned and fled; but he found himself surrounded by the Roman troops and

[1] Ibid. ch. 19.

[2] Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* in his *Opera inedita*, vol. ii. p. 340.

[3] Νίκην ἄναιμον ὠνομαζον (Dio Cass. lxviii. 19).

virtually a prisoner. Upon this he demanded a private audience, and was conducted to the Emperor's tent, where he made proposals which were coldly rejected, and he was given to understand that he must regard his crown as forfeited. It was further required of him that, to prevent false rumours, he should present himself a second time at the Emperor's tribunal, prefer his requests openly, and hear the Imperial decision. The Parthian consented. With a boldness worthy of his high descent, he affirmed that he had neither been defeated nor made prisoner, but had come of his own free will to hold a conference with the Roman chief, in the full expectation of receiving from him, as Tiridates had received from Nero, the crown of Armenia, confident, moreover, that in any case he would suffer no wrong, but be allowed to depart in safety. Trajan answered that he did not intend to give the crown of Armenia to any one—the country belonged to the Romans, and should have a Roman governor. As for Parthamasiris, he was free to go whithersoever he pleased, and his Parthian attendants might accompany him. The Armenians, however, must remain. They were Roman subjects, and owed no allegiance to Parthia.[1]

The tale thus told, with no appearance of shame, by the Roman historian, Dio Cassius, is sufficiently disgraceful to Trajan, but it does not reveal to us the entire baseness of his conduct. We learn from other writers,[2] two of them contemporary with the events, that the pompous dismissal of Parthamasiris with leave to go wherever he chose, was a mere pretence.

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[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 20.

[2] Eutrop. *Breviar.* viii. 3; Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 349; Arrian, Fr. 16. Fronto and Arrian were contemporary with Trajan.

Trajan had come to the conclusion, if not before the interview, at any rate in the course of it, that the youth was dangerous, and could not be allowed to live. He therefore sent troops to arrest him as he rode off from the camp, and when he offered resistance, caused him to be set upon and slain. This conduct he afterwards strove to justify by accusing the young prince of having violated the agreement made at the interview;[1] but even the debased moral sense of his age was revolted by his act, and declared the grounds whereon he excused it insufficient. Good faith and honour had been sacrificed (it was said) to expediency—the reputation of Rome had been tarnished—it would have been better, even if Parthamasiris were guilty, to have let him escape, than to have punished him at the cost of a public scandal.[2] So strongly was the disgrace felt, that some (it seems) endeavoured to exonerate Trajan from the responsibility of having contrived the deed, and to throw the blame of it on Exedares, the ex-king of Armenia and brother of Parthamasiris. But Trajan had not sunk so low as to shift his fault on another. He declared openly that the act was his own, and that Exedares had had no part in it.[3]

The death of Parthamasiris was followed by the complete submission of Armenia.[4] Chosroës made no attempt to avenge the murder of his nephew, or to contest with Trajan the possession of the long-disputed territory. A little doubt seems for a short time to have been entertained by the Romans as to its disposal.

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[1] Ὅτι πρῶτος παραβαίνων τὰ ξυγκείμενα ἔτυχε τῆς δίκης. (Arrian, l.s.c.)

[2] See Fronto, l.s.c.

[3] See the fragment of Arrian given by Suidas, *ad voc.* γνῶσις, which consists of words that Arrian must have put into the mouth of Trajan:—Περὶ Παρθαμασίρου δέ, οὐχὶ Ἀξιδάρου εἶναι, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ τὴν γνῶσιν· ὅτι πρῶτος, κ.τ.λ. (See above, note [1].)

[4] Dio Cass. lxviii. 21.

The right of Exedares to be reinstated in his former kingdom[1] was declared by some to be clear; and it was probably urged that the injuries which he had suffered at the hands of Chosroës would make him a sure Roman ally. But these arguments had no weight with Trajan. He had resolved upon his course. An end should be put, at once and for ever, to the perpetual intrigues and troubles inseparable from such relations as had hitherto subsisted between Rome and the Armenian kingdom. The Greater and the Lesser Armenia should be annexed to the Empire, and should form a single Roman province.[2] This settled, attention was turned to the neighbouring countries. Alliance was made with Anchialus, king of the Heniochi and Macheloni, and presents were sent to him in return for those which his envoys had brought to Trajan.[3] A new king was given to the Albanians. Friendly relations were established with the chiefs of the Iberi, Sauromatæ, Colchi, and even with the tribes settled on the Cimmerian Bosphorus.[4] The nations of these parts were taught that Rome was the power which the inhabitants even of the remote East and North had most to fear; and a wholesome awe was instilled into them which would, it was hoped, conduce to the general tranquillity of the Empire.

But the objects thus accomplished, considerable as they were, did not seem to the indefatigable Emperor sufficient for one year. Having settled the affairs of the North-east, and left garrisons in the chief Armenian strongholds,[5] Trajan marched southwards to Edessa,

[1] Arrian, ap. Suid. *ad voc.* ἀμφίλογος.
[2] Eutrop. *Breviar.* viii. 2; *Hist. Miscell.* x. 3, p. 206 (ed. Eyssenhardt, Berolin. 1868).
[3] Dio Cass. lxviii, 19.
[4] Eutrop. l.s.c.; *Hist. Misc.* l.s.c.; Plin. *Ep.* x. 13–15.
[5] Dio Cass. lxviii. 21.

the capital of the province of Osrhoêné, and there received the humble submission of Abgarus, who had hitherto wavered between the two contending powers.[1] Manisares, a satrap of these parts, who had a quarrel of his own with Chosroës, also embraced his cause,[2] while other chiefs wavered in their allegiance to Parthia, but feared to trust the invader. Hostilities were commenced by attacks in two directions—southward against the tract known as Anthemusia, between the Euphrates and the Khabour;[3] and eastward against Batnæ, Nisibis, and the mountain region known as Gordyêné, or the Mons Masius.[4] Success attended both these movements; and, before winter set in, the Romans had made themselves masters of the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, and had even pushed southwards as far as Singara,[5] a town on the skirts of the modern Sinjar mountain-range. Mesopotamia was at once, like Armenia, 'reduced into the form of a Roman province.' Medals were issued representing the conqueror with these subject countries at his foot;[6] and the obsequious Senate conferred the title of 'Parthicus' upon the Imperator,[7] who had thus robbed the Parthians of two provinces.

According to some, the head-quarters of Trajan during the ensuing winter were at Nisibis or Edessa,[8]

[1] Dio Cass. (l.s.c.) Compare ch. 18.

[2] Ibid. ch. 22.

[3] Suidas *ad voc.* ὑφηγήσαντο.

[4] The captures of Nisibis and Batnæ are mentioned by Dio (lxviii. 23). The general reduction of the Cardueni (Kurds), or inhabitants of Gordyêné, is attested by Eutropius (l.s.c.) and the *Historia Miscella* (l.s.c.).

[5] Dio Cass. lxviii. 22.

[6] See a representation in Vaillant's *Hist. Arsac.* p. 312, and compare Eckhel, *Doct. Num.* vol. vi. p. 438.

[7] Dio Cass. lxviii. 23.

[8] So Dean Merivale (*Rom. Empire*, vol. viii. p. 162), following Francke. I differ with reluctance and hesitation; but, on the whole, Dio, as reported by Xiphilinus, seems to me our safest guide for the general course of the events of this period.

but the nexus of the narrative in Dio seems rather to require, and the other ancient notices to allow, the belief that he returned to Syria and wintered at Antioch,[1] leaving his generals in possession of the conquered regions, with orders to make every preparation for the campaign of the next year. Among other instructions which they received was the command to build a large fleet at Nisibis, where good timber was abundant,[2] and to prepare for its transport to the Tigris, at the point where that stream quits the mountains and enters on the open country.[3] Meanwhile, in the month of December,[4] the magnificent Syrian capital, where Trajan had his head-quarters, was visited by a calamity of a most appalling character. An earthquake, of a violence and duration unexampled in ancient times, destroyed the greater part of its edifices, and buried in their ruins vast multitudes of the inhabitants and of the strangers that had flocked into the town in consequence of the Imperial presence. Many Romans of the highest rank perished, and among them M. Virgilianus Pedo, one of the consuls for the year. The Emperor himself was in danger, and only escaped by creeping through a window of the house in which

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[1] Dio distinctly places the earthquake at Antioch and Trajan's escape from its perils at the close of the campaign of A.D. 115, which he terminates with the captures of Nisibis and Batnæ (Xiphil. *Epit. Dion.* p. 249). Malala also assigns the earthquake to this winter, Dec. 115 (xi. p. 359). I do not understand the argument of Clinton, that the death of Pedo (the consul of A.D. 115) in the earthquake proves it to have occurred in the preceding winter (*F. R.* vol. i. p. 100). Whether the earthquake was in January, A.D. 115, or in December of that year, it would equally fall within Pedo's consulate.

[2] Dio Cass. lxviii. 26. Compare Taylor in *Geograph. Journal*, vol. xxxv. p. 56.

[3] Κατὰ τὸ Καρδυηνον ὄρος. (Dio Cass. l.s.c.) The Cardunian mountain of Dio is the Mons Masius of Strabo, which runs parallel with the course of the Upper Tigris from Diarbekr to Tilleh, and meets the river at Jezireh.

[4] Joh. Malal. l.s.c.

he resided; nor was his person quite unscathed. Some falling fragments struck him; but fortunately the injuries that he received were slight, and had no permanent consequences. The bulk of the surviving inhabitants, finding themselves houseless, or afraid to enter their houses if they still stood, bivouacked during the height of the winter in the open air, in the Circus, and elsewhere about the city. The terror which legitimately followed from the actual perils was heightened by imaginary fears. It was thought that the Mons Casius, which towers above Antioch to the south-west, was about to be shattered by the violence of the shocks, and to precipitate itself upon the ruined town.[1]

Nor were the horrors of the catastrophe confined to Antioch. The earthquake was one of a series which carried destruction and devastation through the greater part of the East. In the Roman province of Asia, four cities were completely destroyed—Eleia, Myrina, Pitané, and Cymé. In Greece, two towns were reduced to ruins, namely, Opus in Locris, and Oritus. In Galatia three cities, unnamed, suffered the same fate.[2] It seemed as if Providence had determined that the new glories which Rome was gaining by the triumphs of her arms should be obscured by calamities of a kind that no human power could avert or control, and that despite the efforts of Trajan to make his reign a time of success and splendour, it should go down to posterity as one of gloom, suffering, and disaster.

Trajan, however, did not allow himself to be diverted from the objects that he had set before him by such trifling matters as the sufferings of a certain number of

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[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 24, 25.
[2] *Hist. Misc.* x. 5; Oros. vii. 12; Euseb. *Chron. Can.* ii. pp. 380, 381.

provincial towns. With the approach of spring (A.D. 116) he was up and doing.[1] His officers had obeyed his orders, and a fleet had been built at Nisibis during the winter amply sufficient for the purpose for which it was wanted. The ships were so constructed that they could be easily taken to pieces and put together again. Trajan had them conveyed on wagons to the Tigris at Jezireh,[2] and there proceeded to make preparations for passing the river and attacking Adiabêné. By embarking on board some of his ships companies of heavy-armed and archers, who protected his working parties, and at the same time threatening with other ships to cross at many different points, he was able, though with much difficulty, to bridge the stream in the face of a powerful body of the enemy, and to land his troops safely on the opposite bank. This done, his work was more than half accomplished. Chosroës remained aloof from the war, either husbanding his resources, or perhaps occupied by civil feuds,[3] and left the defence of his outlying provinces to their respective governors. Mebarsapes, the Adiabenian monarch, had set his hopes on keeping the invader out of his kingdom by defending the line of the Tigris, and when that was forced, he seems to have despaired, and to have made no further effort. His towns and strongholds were taken one after another, without their offering any serious resistance. Nineveh, Arbela, and Gaugamala fell into the enemy's hands. Adenystræ, a place of great strength, was captured by a small knot

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[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 26.

[2] See above, p. 308, note [3].

[3] These are alluded to by Dio at the close of ch. 26. A passage in John of Malala (*Chron.* xi. p. 273) sets them forth more at large. His account of them, however, cannot be accepted, since it contradicts Dio and Victor.

of Roman prisoners, who, when they found their friends near, rose upon the garrison, killed the commandant, and opened the gates to their countrymen.[1] In a short time the whole tract between the Tigris and the Zagros mountains was overrun; resistance ceased; and the invader was able to proceed to further conquests.

It might have been expected that an advance would have at once been directed on Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital; but Trajan, for some reason which is not made clear to us, determined otherwise. He repassed the Tigris into Mesopotamia, took Hatra[2] (now el-Hadhr), at that time one of the most considerable places in those parts, and then crossing to the Euphrates, descended its course to Hit[3] and Babylon. No resistance was offered him, and he became master of the mighty Babylon without a blow. Seleucia seems also to have submitted;[4] and it remained only to attack and take the capital in order to have complete possession of the entire region watered by the two great rivers. For this purpose a fleet was again necessary, and, as the ships used on the Upper Tigris had, it would seem, been abandoned,[5] Trajan conveyed a flotilla, which had

[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 22. This fragment is misplaced in Fabricius's generally excellent edition of Dio (Hamburg, 1752). It belongs to the period covered by ch. 26.

[2] The capture of Hatra is implied in the mention of its *revolt* (Dio Cass. lxviii. 31).

[3] Ibid. ch. 27. The only bitumen-pits in Babylonia are at Hit (the Ἴς of Herodotus, i. 179).

[4] Dean Merivale supposes Seleucia to have held out after the fall of Ctesiphon (*Rom. Empire*, vol. viii. p. 163), and says its reduction was left to Trajan's generals. To me this seems unlikely, and I find no authority for the statement.

[5] Few writers notice the employment by Trajan of two fleets, one on each river; and not one attempts to account for the transfer of the Euphrates fleet to the Tigris when there was already a flotilla upon the latter stream. Fabricius alone notices the difficulty (note on § 172). I should imagine that the artificial dams and natural reefs which cross the bed of the Tigris between Mosul and Tekrit (Layard, *Nin. and Babylon*, p. 466) rendered the descent of the vessels in the later months of summer impracticable. That the vessels were of a large size appears from Arrian, Fr. 19.

descended the Euphrates, across Mesopotamia on rollers, and launching it upon the Tigris, proceeded to the attack of the great metropolis.[1] Here again the resistance that he encountered was trivial. Like Babylon and Seleucia, Ctesiphon at once opened its gates. The monarch had departed with his family and his chief treasures,[2] and had placed a vast space between himself and his antagonist. He was prepared to contend with his Roman foe, not in battle array, but by means of distance, natural obstacles, and guerilla warfare. He had evidently determined neither to risk a battle, nor stand a siege. As Trajan advanced, he retreated, seeming to yield all, but no doubt intending, if it should be necessary, to turn to bay at last, and in the meantime diligently fomenting that spirit of discontent and disaffection which was shortly to render the further advance of the Imperial troops impossible.

But, for the moment, all appeared to go well with the invaders. The surrender of Ctesiphon brought with it the submission of the whole region on the lower courses of the great rivers, and gave the conqueror access to the waters of a new sea. Trajan may be excused if he overrated his successes, regarded himself as another Alexander, and deemed that the great monarchy, so long the rival of Rome, was now at last swept away, and that the entire East was on the point of being absorbed into the Roman Empire. The capture by his lieutenants of the golden throne of the Parthian kings may well have seemed to him emblematic of this change; and the flight of Chosroës into the

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[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 28.

[2] This appears from the capture of his daughter and his golden throne; which were taken by the Romans who went in pursuit of him, at Susa. (See Spartian. *Hadr.* § 13; Capit. *Ant. Pi.* § 9, &c.)

remote and barbarous regions of the far East may have helped to lull his adversary into a feeling of complete security. Such a feeling is implied in the pleasure voyage of the conqueror down the Tigris to the Persian Gulf, in his embarkation on the waters of the Southern Sea, in the inquiries which he instituted with respect to Indian affairs, and in the regret to which he gave utterance, that his advanced years prevented him from making India the term of his labours.[1] No shadow of his coming troubles seems to have flitted before the eyes of the Emperor during the weeks that he was thus occupied—weeks which he passed in self-complacent contemplation of the past and dreams of an impossible future.

Suddenly, tidings of a most alarming kind dispelled his pleasing visions, and roused him to renewed exertions. Revolt, he found, had broken out everywhere in his rear. At Seleucia, at Hatra, at Nisibis, at Edessa,[2] the natives had flown to arms; his entire line of retreat was beset by foes, and he ran a risk of having his return cut off, and of perishing in the land which he had invaded. Trajan had hastily to retrace his steps, and to send his generals in all directions to check the spread of insurrection. Seleucia was recovered by Erucius Clarus and Julius Alexander, who punished its rebellion by delivering it to the flames. Lucius Quietus retook Nisibis, and plundered and burnt Edessa. Maximus, on the contrary, was defeated and slain by the rebels,[3] who completely destroyed the Roman army under his orders.[4] Trajan, perceiving

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[1] Dio Cass. lxviii. 28 and 29.
[2] Ibid. chs. 30 and 31.
[3] Ibid. ch. 30.
[4] Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 338. 'Legatus cum exercitu cæsus.'

how slight his hold was upon the conquered populations, felt compelled to change his policy, and, as the only mode of pacifying, even temporarily, the growing discontent, instead of making Lower Mesopotamia into a Roman province, as he had made Armenia, Upper Mesopotamia, and Adiabêné (or Assyria), he proceeded with much pomp and display to set up a native king. The prince selected was a certain Parthamaspates, a member of the royal family of the Arsacidæ, who had previously sided with Rome against the reigning monarch.[1] In a plain near Ctesiphon, where he had had his tribunal erected, Trajan, after a speech wherein he extolled the greatness of his own exploits, presented to the assembled Romans and natives this youth as King of Parthia, and with his own hand placed the diadem upon his brow.[2]

Under cover of the popularity acquired by this act, the aged Emperor now commenced his retreat. The line of the Tigris was no doubt open to him, and along this he might have marched in peace to Upper Mesopotamia or Armenia; but either he preferred the direct route to Syria by way of Hatra and Singara, or the insult offered to the Roman name by the independent attitude which the people of the former place still maintained induced him to diverge from the general line of his course, and to enter the desert in order to chastise their presumption. Hatra was a small town, but strongly fortified. The inhabitants at this time belonged[3] to that Arabian immigration which was

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[1] This is so probable, that we may accept the evidence of John of Malala on the point (l.s.c.), notwithstanding the general untrustworthiness of his narrative.

[2] Dio Cass. lxviii. 30.

[3] Ibid. lxviii. 31. Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐς τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἦλθε καὶ τοῖς Ἀτρηνοῖς ἐπεχείρησε. (Compare lxxv. 11, 12; Herodian, iii. 28, &c.)

always more and more encroaching upon Mesopotamia. They were Parthian subjects, but appear to have had their own native kings.[1] On the approach of Trajan, nothing daunted, they closed their gates, and prepared themselves for resistance. Though he battered down a portion of the wall, they repulsed all the attempts of his soldiers to enter through the breach, and when he himself came near to reconnoitre, they drove him off with their arrows. His troops suffered from the heat, from the want of provisions and fodder, from the swarms of flies which disputed with them every morsel of their food and every drop of their drink, and finally from violent hail and thunderstorms. Trajan was forced to withdraw after a time without effecting anything, and to own himself baffled and defeated by the garrison of a petty fortress.[2]

The year, A.D. 116, seems to have closed with this memorable failure. In the following spring, Chosroës, learning the retreat of the Romans, returned to Ctesiphon, expelled Parthamaspates, who retired into Roman territory, and re-established his authority in Susiana and Southern Mesopotamia.[3] The Romans, however, still held Assyria (Adiabêné) and Upper Mesopotamia, as well as Armenia, and had the strength of the Empire been exerted to maintain these possessions, they might have continued in all probability to be Roman provinces, despite any efforts that Parthia could have made to recover them. But in August, A.D. 117, Trajan died; and his successor, Hadrian, was deeply impressed with the opinion that Trajan's conquests had been impolitic, and that it was unsafe for

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[1] Herodian. iii. 1.
[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.
[3] Ibid. lxviii. 33. Trajan was about to make another expedition into Southern Mesopotamia, when his last illness prevented him.

Rome to attempt under the circumstances of the time any extension of the Eastern frontier. The first act of Hadrian was to relinquish the three provinces which Trajan's Parthian war had added to the Empire, and to withdraw the legions within the Euphrates.[1] Assyria and Mesopotamia were at once re-occupied by the Parthians. Armenia appears to have been made over by Hadrian to Parthamaspates,[2] and to have thus returned to its former condition of a semi-independent kingdom, leaning alternately on Rome and Parthia. It has been asserted that Osrhoêné was placed likewise upon the same footing;[3] but the numismatic evidence adduced in favour of this view is weak;[4] and upon the whole it appears most probable that, like the other Mesopotamian countries, Osrhoêné again fell under the dominion of the Arsacidæ. Rome therefore gained nothing by the great exertions which she had made,[5] unless it were a partial recovery of her lost influence in Armenia, and a knowledge of the growing weakness of her Eastern rival—a knowledge which, though it produced no immediate fruit, was of importance, and was borne in mind when, after another half-century of peace, the relations of the two empires became once more unsatisfactory.

The voluntary withdrawal of Hadrian from Assyria and Mesopotamia placed him on amicable terms

[1] Eutrop. *Breviar.* viii. 3; *Hist. Miscell.* x. 7.

[2] Æl. Spart. *Hadrian.* § 5. Spartian by mistake calls him Partamo*siris*.

[3] See Vaillant, *Hist. Arsac.* p. 319.

[4] There is, I believe, only a single coin which is thought to support the view that Osrhoëné became a kingdom dependent on the Romans at the accession of Hadrian. This is described by Eckhel (*Doct. Num.* vol. iii. p. 512) and Mionnet (*Description de Médailles*, vol. v. p. 613), who both view it with suspicion.

[5] Dio Cass. lxviii. 33. Οὕτω μὲν οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι, τῆς τε Ἀρμενίας καὶ τῆς Μεσοποταμίας τῆς πλείονος τῶν τε Πάρθων κρατήσαντες, μάτην ἐπόνησαν καὶ μάτην ἐκινδύνευσαν.

with Parthia during the whole of his reign. Chosroës and his successor could not but feel themselves under obligations to the monarch who, without being forced to it by a defeat, had restored to Parthia the most valuable of her provinces. On one occasion alone do we hear of any, even threatened, interruption of the friendly relations subsisting between the two powers; and then the misunderstanding, whatever it may have been, was easily rectified and peace maintained. Hadrian, in A.D. 122, had an interview with Chosroës on his eastern frontier, and by personal explanations and assurances averted, we are told,[1] an impending outbreak. Not long afterwards (A.D. 130, probably) he returned to Chosroës the daughter who had been captured by Trajan, and at the same time promised the restoration of the golden throne,[2] on which the Parthians appear to have set a special value.

It must have been soon after he received back his daughter that Chosroës died. His latest coins bear a date equivalent to A.D. 128;[3] and the Roman historians give Volagases II. as king of Parthia in A.D. 133.[4] It has been generally supposed that this prince was Chosroës' son, and succeeded him in the natural course;[5] but the evidence of the Parthian coins is strong against these suppositions. According to them, Volagases had been a pretender to the Parthian throne as early as

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[1] Æl. Spart. *Hadrian.* § 12, ad fin.

[2] Ibid. § 13.

[3] A coin of Chosroës in the Brit. Museum bears the date ΘΛΥ, which corresponds to A.D. 127–8. A coin ascribed to Volagases II. by Mr. Lindsay, with the date ΗΜΥ (A.D. 136–7), has a head exactly like that of Chosroës upon it. (See Lindsay, Pl. ix. No. 77.)

[4] Dio Cass. lxix. 15; Xiphil. *Ep. Dion.* xv. (p. 264).

[5] Vaillant, *Hist. Arsac.* p. 323; Eckhel, *Doctr. Num.* vol. iii. p. 537; Lewis, *Hist. of the Parthian Empire*, p. 332; Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, p. 116; Plate in Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Biography*, vol. i. p. 359.

A.D. 78, and had struck coins both in that year and the following one, about the date of the accession of Pacorus. His attempt had, however, at that time failed, and for forty-one years he kept his pretensions in abeyance; but about A.D. 119 or 120 he appears to have again come forward, and to have disputed the crown with Chosroës, or reigned contemporaneously with him over some portion of the Parthian kingdom, till about A.D. 130, when—probably on the death of Chosroës—he was acknowledged as sole king by the entire nation. Such is the evidence of the coins, which in this case are very peculiar, and bear the name of Volagases from first to last.[1] It seems to follow from them that Chosroës was succeeded, not by a son, but by a rival, an old claimant of the crown, who cannot have been much younger than Chosroës himself.

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[1] The usual legend on a tetradrachm of Volagases II. is ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΑΛΑΓΑΣΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ. His drachms bear almost universally the inscription וולגשו מלכא, or *Volgasu Malcha*, 'King Volagases.'

CHAPTER XIX.

Reign of Volagases II. Invasion of the Alani. Communications between Volagases and Antoninus Pius. Death of Volagases II. and Accession of Volagases III. Aggressive War of Volagases III. on Rome. Campaign of A.D. 162. *Verus sent to the East. Sequel of the War. Losses suffered by Parthia. Death of Volagases III.*

'Parthicum bellum, quod Volagessus . . . indixit.'
Jul. Capit. *M. Antonin.* § 8.

VOLAGASES II. appears to have occupied the Parthian throne, after the death of Chosroës, for the space of nineteen years. His reign has a general character of tranquillity, which agrees well with the advanced period of life at which, according to the coins, he first became actual king of Parthia.[1] It was disturbed by only one actual outbreak of hostilities, an occasion upon which Volagases stood upon the defensive; and on one other occasion was for a brief period threatened with disturbance. Otherwise it seems to have been wholly peaceful. So far as appears, no pretenders troubled it. The coins show, for the years between A.D. 130 and A.D. 149, the head of but one monarch,

[1] If we allow Volagases to have been even twenty years of age when he first came forward as a claimant of the Parthian crown (A.D. 77–8), he must have been seventy-two at the death of Chosroës in A.D. 130.

a head of a marked type, which is impossible to be mistaken.[1]

The occasion upon which actual hostilities disturbed the repose of Volagases was in A.D. 133, when, by the intrigues of Pharasmanes, king of the Iberians, a great horde of Alani from the tract beyond the Caucasus was induced to pour itself through the passes of that mountain chain upon the territories of both the Parthians and the Romans.[2] Pharasmanes had previously shown contempt for the power of Rome by refusing to pay court to Hadrian, when, in A.D. 130, he invited the monarchs of Western Asia generally to a conference.[3] He had also, it would seem, been insulted by Hadrian, who, when Pharasmanes sent him a number of cloaks made of cloth-of-gold, employed them in the adornment of three hundred convicts condemned to furnish sport to the Romans in the amphitheatre.[4] What quarrel he had with the Parthians we are not told; but it is related that at his instigation the savage Alani, introduced within the mountain barrier, poured at one and the same time into Media Atropatêné, which was a dependency of Parthia; into Armenia, which was under Parthamaspates; and into the Roman province of Cappadocia. Volagases sent an embassy to Rome complaining of the conduct of Pharasmanes,[5] who appears to have been regarded as ruling under Roman protection; and that prince was sum-

Volagases II.

[1] Volagases II. wears a tiara, ornamented at the edge with hooks or feathers. His nose is prominent, his eye large, his hair curled, his beard pointed and wavy.

[2] Dio Cass. lxix. 15; Zonaras, p. 590, C.

[3] Æl. Spart. *Hadrian.* § 13.

[4] Ibid. § 17, ad fin.

[5] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

moned to Rome in order to answer for his conduct. But the Alanian inroad had to be dealt with at once. The Roman governor of Cappadocia, who was Arrian, the historian of Alexander, by a mere display of force drove the barbarians from his province. Volagases showed a tamer spirit; he was content to follow an example, often set in the East, and already in one instance imitated by Rome,[1] but never adopted by any nation as a settled policy without fatal consequences, and to buy at a high price the retreat of the invaders.

It was to have been expected that Rome would have punished severely the guilt of Pharasmanes in exposing the Empire and its allies to horrors such as always accompany the inroads of a barbarous people. But though the Iberian monarch was compelled to travel to Rome and make his appearance before the Emperor's tribunal,[2] yet Hadrian, so far from punishing him, was induced to load him with benefits and honours. He permitted him to sacrifice in the Capitol, placed his equestrian statue in the temple of Bellona, and granted him an augmentation of territory.[3] Volagases can scarcely have been pleased at these results of his complaints; he bore them, however, without murmuring, and, when (in A.D. 138) Hadrian died and was succeeded by his adopted son, T. Aurelius, better known as Antoninus Pius, Volagases sent to Rome an embassy of congratulation, and presented the new monarch with a crown of gold.[4]

[1] In the case of the Dacians. (Dio Cass. lxviii. 6; Plin. *Paneg.* 11, 12.)

[2] Dio Cass. lxix. 15.

[3] Ibid.

[4] This appears from a coin struck in the first year of Antoninus, having on the obverse the head of the Emperor, and on the reverse a female figure, holding a bow and quiver with the left hand, and presenting a crown with the right, with the inscription PARTHIA.

It was probably at this same time that he ventured to make an unpleasant demand. Hadrian had promised that the golden throne which Trajan had captured in his expedition, and by which the Parthians set so much store, should be surrendered to them;[1] but this promise he had failed to perform. Volagases appears to have thought that his successor might be more facile, and accordingly instructed his envoys to re-open the subject, to remind Antoninus of the pledged faith of his adopted father, and to make a formal request for the delivery of the valued relic.[2] Antoninus, however, proved as obdurate as Hadrian. He was not to be persuaded by any argument to give back the trophy; and the envoys had to return with the report that their representations upon the point had been in vain, and had wholly failed to move the new Emperor.

The history of Volagases II. ends with this transaction. No events are assignable to the last ten years of his reign, which was probably a season of profound repose, in the East as it was in the West—a period having (as our greatest historian observes of it) 'the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history,' which is, indeed (as he says), 'little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.'[3] The influence of Rome extended beyond his borders. As in modern times it has become a proverb, that when a particular European nation is satisfied the peace of the world is assured, so in the days whereof we are treating it would seem that Rome had only to desire repose, for the surrounding nations

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[1] Æl. Spart. *Hadrian.* § 13.
[2] Jul. Capit. *Anton. Pi.* § 9.
[3] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 205; Smith's ed.

to find themselves tranquil. The inference appears to be, that not only were the wars which occurred between Rome and her neighbours for the most part stirred up by herself; but that even the civil commotions which disturbed States upon her borders had very generally their origin in Roman intrigues, which, skilfully concealed from view, nevertheless directed the course of affairs in surrounding States, and roused in them, when Rome thought her interests required it, civil differences, disorders, and contentions.

The successor of Volagases II. was Volagases III., who was most probably his son, although of this there is no direct evidence. The Parthian coins show[1] that Volagases III. ascended the throne in A.D. 148 or 149, and reigned till A.D. 190 or 191—a space of forty-two years. We may assume that he was a tolerably young man at his accession, though the effigy upon his earliest coins is well bearded, and that he was somewhat tired of the long inactivity which had characterised the period of his father's rule. He seems very early to have meditated a war with Rome,[2] and to have taken certain steps which betrayed his intentions; but, upon their coming to the knowledge of Antoninus, and that prince writing to him on the subject, Volagases altered his plans,[3] and resolved to wait, at any rate, until a change of Emperor at Rome should give him a chance of taking the enemy at a disadvantage. Thus it was not till A.D. 161—twelve years after his accession—that his original design was carried out, and the flames

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[1] See Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, pp. 186, 187.

[2] Jul. Capit. *Anton. Phil.* § 8. 'Parthicum bellum, *paratum sub Pio*, Marci et Veri tempore indixit Volagessus.'

[3] Ibid., *Anton. Pi.* § 9. 'Parthorum regem ab Armeniorum expugnatione solis litteris reppulit [Pius].'

of war were once more lighted in the East to the ruin and desolation of the fairest portion of Western Asia.

The good Antoninus was succeeded in the spring of A.D. 161 by his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, who at once associated with him in the government the other adopted son of Antoninus, Lucius Verus. Upon this, thinking that the opportunity for which he had been so long waiting had at last arrived, Volagases marched his troops suddenly into Armenia, expelled Soæmus, the king protected by the Romans,[1] and established in his place a certain Tigranes, a scion of the old royal stock, whom the Armenians regarded as their rightful monarch.[2] News of this bold stroke soon reached the governors of the adjacent Roman provinces, and Severianus, præfect of Cappadocia, a Gaul by birth, incited by the predictions of a pseudo-prophet of those parts, named Alexander,[3] proceeded at the head of a legion into the adjoining kingdom, in the hope of crushing the nascent insurrection and punishing at once the Armenian rebels and their Parthian supporters. Scarcely, however, had he crossed the Euphrates, when he found himself confronted by an overwhelming force, commanded by a Parthian called Chosroës,[4] and was compelled to throw himself into the city of Elegeia, where he was immediately surrounded and besieged.[5] Various tales were told of his conduct under these circumstances, and of the fate which overtook him;[6] the most probable

[1] See Jambl. ap. Phot. *Bibliothec.* Cod. xciv. p. 241; Dio Cass. ap. Suid. ad voc. Μάουιος; Fronto, *Epist. ad Verum*, ii. 1 (p. 127, ed. Naber).

[2] Mos. Choren. *Hist. Armen.* ii. 61.

[3] Lucian. *Alex. Pseudo-Mant.* § 27.

[4] Ibid. *Quomodo Hist. sit conscribend.* § 21.

[5] Dio Cass. lxxi. 2.

[6] According to some, he starved himself (Lucian. l.s.c.); according to others, he cut his throat with a piece of glass (ibid. § 27). The true account of his death is given by Dio. (l.s.c. Οὐολόγαισος . . . στρατόπεδον ὅλον Ῥωμαϊκὸν αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόσι κατεστόξευσε καὶ διέφθειρε.)

account being that after holding out for three days he and his troops were assailed on all sides, and, after a brave resistance, were shot down almost to a man. The Parthians then crossed the Euphrates, and carried fire and sword through Syria.[1] Attidius Cornelianus, the proconsul, having ventured to oppose them, was repulsed.[2] Vague thoughts of flying to arms and shaking off the Roman yoke possessed the minds of the Syrians,[3] and threatened to lead to some overt act. The Parthians passed through Syria into Palestine, and almost the whole East seemed to lie open to their incursions. When these facts were reported at Rome, it was resolved to send Lucius Verus to the East. He was of an age to undergo the hardships of campaigning, and therefore better fitted than Marcus Aurelius to undertake the conduct of a great war. But, as his military talent was distrusted, it was considered necessary to place at his disposal a number of the best Roman generals of the time, whose services he might use while he claimed as his own their successes. Statius Priscus, Avidius Cassius, and Martius Verus, were the most important of these officers; and it was by them, and not by Verus himself, that the military operations were, in fact, conducted.

It was not till late in the year A.D. 162 that Verus, having with reluctance torn himself from Italy,[4] appeared, with his lieutenants, upon the scene in Syria, and, after vainly offering them terms of peace,[5] commenced hostilities against the triumphant Parthians. The young Emperor did not adventure his own person

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[1] Dio Cass. lxxi. 2; Oros. vii. 15.
[2] Jul. Capit. *Anton. Phil.* § 8.
[3] Ibid. *Ver. Imperat.* § 6. 'Syris defectionem cogitantibus.'
[4] Ibid. l.s.c.
[5] Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* p. 208, ed. Naber.

in the field, but stationed himself at Antioch,[1] where he could enjoy the pleasures and amusements of a luxurious capital, while he committed to his lieutenants the task of recovering Syria and Armenia, and of chastising the invaders. Avidius Cassius, to whom the Syrian legions were entrusted, had a hard task to bring them into proper discipline after their long period of inaction,[2] but succeeded after a while by the use of almost unexampled severities. Attacked by Volagases within the limits of his province, he made a successful defence,[3] and in a short time was able to take the offensive, to defeat Volagases in a great battle near Europus,[4] and (A.D. 163) to drive the Parthians across the Euphrates. The Armenian war was at the same time being pressed by Statius Priscus, who advanced without a check from the frontier to the capital, Artaxata, which he took and (as it seems) destroyed.[5] He then built a new city, which he strongly garrisoned with Roman troops, and sent intelligence of his successes to Rome, whither Soæmus, the expelled monarch, had betaken himself. Soæmus was upon this replaced on the Armenian throne, the task of settling him in the government being deputed to a certain Thucydides, by whose efforts, together with those of Martius Verus, all opposition to the restored monarch was suppressed, and the entire country tranquillised.[6]

Rome had thus in the space of two years recovered her losses, and shown Parthia that she was still well

[1] Dio Cass. lxi. 2; Jul. Capit. *Ver. Imp.* § 7.

[2] Vulc. Gall. *Avid. Cass.* §§ 5, 6. Compare Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* pp. 206–208; where, however, the credit of establishing a proper discipline is assigned by the polite courtier to Verus.

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c. Ἐπιόντα τὸν Οὐολόγαισον γενναίως ὑπέμεινε.

[4] Lucian. *Quomodo historia sit conscrib.* § 20 and § 28.

[5] Jul. Capit. *Ant. Phil.* § 9; Suidas ad voc. Βῆρος.

[6] Suidas, l.s.c. Comp. Jamblich. ap. Phot. *Bibl.* xciv. p. 241.

able to maintain the position in Western Asia which she had acquired by the victories of Trajan. But such a measure of success did not content the ambitious generals into whose hands the incompetence of Verus had thrown the real direction of the war. Military distinction at this time offered to a Roman a path to the very highest honours, each successful general becoming at once by force of his position a candidate for the Imperial dignity. Of the various able officers employed under Verus, the most distinguished and the most ambitious was Cassius—a chief who ultimately raised the standard of revolt against Aurelius, and lost his life in consequence.[1] Cassius, after he had succeeded in clearing Syria of the invaders, was made by Aurelius a sort of generalissimo;[2] and being thus free to act as he chose, determined to carry the war into the enemy's country, and to try if he could not rival, or outdo, the exploits of Trajan fifty years previously. Though we have no continuous narrative of his expedition, we may trace its course with tolerable accuracy in the various fragmentary writings which bear upon the history of the time—from Zeugma, when he crossed the Euphrates into Mesopotamia,[3] to Nicephorium,[4] near the junction of the Belik with the Euphrates; and thence down the course of the stream to Sura[5] (Sippara?) and Babylon.[6] At Sura a battle was fought, in which the Romans were victorious; and then the final efforts were made, which covered Cassius with glory. The great city of Seleucia, upon the Tigris, which had a population of 400,000 souls, was besieged, taken,

[1] Vulc. Gall. *Avid. Cass.* § 7; Dio Cass. lxxi. 22–27.
[2] Dio Cass. lxxi. 3; Vulc. Gall. *Avid. Cass.* § 6.
[3] Dio Cass. Fr. ap. Suidam, sub voc. Ζεῦγμα.
[4] Fronto, *Epist.* ii. 1, p. 121.
[5] Lucian. *Quomodo*, &c., § 29.
[6] Jul. Cap. *Ver. Imp.* § 7.

and burnt, to punish an alleged treason of the inhabitants.[1] Ctesiphon, upon the opposite side of the stream, was occupied, and the summer palace of Volagases there situated was levelled with the ground.[2] The various temples were plundered; secret places, where it was thought treasure might be hid, were examined, and a rich booty was carried off by the invaders. The Parthians, worsted in every encounter, ceased to resist; and all the conquests made by Trajan were recovered. Nor was this all. The Roman general, after conquering the Mesopotamian plain, advanced into the Zagros mountains, and occupied, at any rate, a portion of Media, thereby entitling his Imperial masters to add to the titles of 'Armeniacus,' and 'Parthicus,' which they had already assumed, the further and wholly novel title of 'Medicus.'[3]

But Rome was not to escape the Nemesis which is wont to pursue the over-fortunate. During the stay of the army in Babylonia, a disease was contracted of a strange and terrible character, whereto the superstitious fears of the soldiers assigned a supernatural origin. The pestilence, they said, had crept forth from a subterranean cell in the temple of Comæan Apollo at Seleucia,[4] which those who were plundering the town rashly opened in the hope of its containing treasure, but which held nothing except this fearful scourge, placed there in primeval times by the spells of the Chaldeans. Such a belief, however fanciful, was cal-

[1] Dio Cass. lxxi. 2; Jul. Cap. *Ver. Imp.* § 8; Eutrop. *Brev.* viii. 5; Oros. vii. 15; Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6. Capitolinus disbelieves the charge made against the Seleucians.

[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[3] Jul. Capit. *Ver. Imp.* § 7. Compare Eckhel, *Doct. Num.* vol. vii. pp. 51 and 92.

[4] See Ammian. Marc. xxiii. 6, § 24. Compare Jul. Capit. *Ver. Imp.* § 8.

culated to increase the destructive power of the malady, and so to multiply its victims. Vast numbers of the soldiers perished, we are told, from its effects during the march homeward; their sufferings being further aggravated by the failure of supplies, which was such that many died of famine.[1] The stricken army, upon entering the Roman territory, communicated the infection to the inhabitants, and the return of Verus and his troops to Rome was a march of Death through the provinces. The pestilence raged with special force throughout Italy, and spread as far as the Rhine and the Atlantic Ocean.[2] According to one writer,[3] more than one-half of the entire population, and almost the whole Roman army, was carried off by it.

But though Rome suffered in consequence of the war, its general result was undoubtedly disadvantageous to the Parthians. The expedition of Cassius was the first invasion of Parthia in which Rome had been altogether triumphant. Trajan's campaign had brought about the submission of Armenia to the Romans; but it did not permanently deprive Parthia of any portion of her actual territory. And the successes of the Emperor in his advance were almost balanced by the disasters which accompanied his retreat—disasters so serious as to cause a general belief that Hadrian's concessions sprang more from prudence than from generosity. The war of Verus produced the actual cession to Rome of a Parthian province, which continued thenceforth for centuries to be an integral portion of the Roman empire.[4] Western Mesopotamia, or the

[1] Dio Cass. lxxi. 2.

[2] Amm. Marc. l.s.c.

[3] Eutrop. *Brev.* viii. 6:—'Tantus casus pestilentiæ fuit, ut . . . per Italiam provinciasque maxima hominum pars, militum omnes fere copiæ languore defecerint.' Compare Oros. vii. 15.

[4] This is seen most clearly in the series of Mesopotamian coins, espe-

tract between the Euphrates and the Khabour, passed under the dominion of Rome at this time; and, though not reduced to the condition of a province, was none the less lost to Parthia, and absorbed by Rome into her territory. Parthia, moreover, was penetrated by the Roman arms more deeply at this time than she had ever been previously, and was made to feel, as she had never felt before, that in contending with Rome she was fighting a losing battle. It added to the disgrace of her defeats, and to her own sense of their decisive character, that they were inflicted by a mere general, a man of no very great eminence, and one who was far from possessing the free command of those immense resources which Rome had at her disposal.

Parthia had now, in fact, entered upon the third stage of her decline. The first was reached when she ceased to be an aggressive, and was content to become a stationary, power;[1] the second set in when she began to lose territory by the revolt of her own subjects;[2] the third—which commences at this point—is marked by her inability to protect herself from the attacks of a foreign assailant. The causes of her decline were various. Luxury had no doubt done its ordinary work upon the conquerors of rich and highly-civilised regions, softening down their original ferocity, and rendering them at once less robust in frame, and less bold and venturesome in character. The natural law of exhaustion, which sooner or later affects all races of any distinction, may also not improbably have come into play, rendering the Parthians of the age of Verus

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cially those of Carrhæ and Edessa, which bear on the obverse the head of a Roman Emperor from the time of Aurelius and Verus. (See Mionnet, *Description de Méd. Ant.* tom. v. pp. 593-625.)

[1] See above, p. 194.

[2] See page 293.

very degenerate descendants of those who displayed such brilliant qualities when they contended with Crassus and Mark Antony. Loyalty towards the monarch, and the absolute devotion of every energy to his service, which characterised the earlier times, dwindled and disappeared as the succession became more and more disputed, and the kings less worthy of their subjects' admiration. The strength needed against foreign enemies was, moreover, frequently expended in civil broils; the spirit of patriotism declined; and tameness under insult and indignity took the place of that fierce pride and fiery self-assertion which had once characterised the people.

The war with Rome terminated in the year A.D. 165. Volagases survived its close for at least twenty-five years; but he did not venture at any time to renew the struggle, or to make any effort for the recovery of his lost territory. Once only does he appear to have contemplated an outbreak. When, about the year A.D. 174 or 175, Aurelius being occupied in the west with repelling the attacks of the wild tribes upon the Danube, Avidius Cassius assumed the purple in Syria,[1] and a civil war seemed to be imminent, Volagases appears to have shown an intention of once more taking arms and trying his fortune. A Parthian war was at this time expected to break out by the Romans.[2] But the crisis passed without an actual explosion. The promptness of Aurelius, who, on hearing the news, at once quitted the Danube and marched into Syria, together with the rapid collapse of the Cassian revolt, rendered it imprudent for Volagases to persist in his pro-

[1] Jul. Cap. *Avid. Cass.* § 7; Dio Cass. lxxi. 22.

[2] Jul. Capit. *Ant. Phil.* § 22. 'Imminebat et Parthicum bellum et Britannicum.'

ject. He therefore laid aside all thought of renewing hostilities with Rome; and on the arrival of Aurelius in Syria, sent ambassadors to him with friendly assurances, who were received favourably by the philosophic Emperor.[1]

Four years after this Marcus Aurelius died,[2] and was succeeded in the purple by his youthful son, Lucius Aurelius Commodus. It might have been expected that the accession of this weak and inexperienced prince would have induced Volagases to resume his warlike projects, and attempt the recovery of Mesopotamia. But the scanty history of the time which has come down to us[3] shows no trace of his having entertained any such design. He had probably reached the age at which repose becomes a distinct object of desire, and is infinitely preferred to active exertion. At any rate, it is clear that he made no effort. The reign of Commodus was from first to last untroubled by Oriental disturbance. Volagases III. was for ten years contemporary with this mean and unwarlike prince; but Rome was allowed to retain her Parthian conquests unmolested. At length, in A.D. 190 or 191, Volagases died,[4] and the destinies of Parthia passed into the hands of a new monarch.

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[1] Jul. Capit. *Ant. Phil.* § 26, ad init. The '*Persian* ambassadors' of this passage are undoubtedly envoys from Volagases.

[2] A.D. 180. (See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 178.)

[3] Our authorities for the time of Commodus are three only: Dio in the *Epitome* of Xiphilinus, Herodian (book i.), and Lampridius in the *Historiæ Augustæ Scriptores*. These writers are almost silent as to the condition of the East at the period.

[4] The latest coins of Volagases III. bear the date ΒΦ, which corresponds to the latter part of A.D. 190 and the earlier of A.D. 191.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

CHAPTER XX.

Accession of Volagases IV. His Alliance sought by Pescennius Niger. Part taken by Parthia in the Contest between Niger and Severus. Mesopotamia revolts from Rome. First Eastern Expedition of Severus. Its Results. Second Expedition. Successes of Severus. His Failure at Hatra. General Results of the War. Death of Volagases IV.

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Σεβῆρος ἐκστρατεύει κατὰ τῶν Πάρθων . . . ἦρχε δ' αὐτῶν Οὐολόγαισος.—Dio Cass. lxxv. 9.

ON the death of Volagases III., in A.D. 190 or 191, the Parthian crown fell to another prince of the same name, who was probably the eldest son of the late monarch.[1] This prince was scarcely settled upon the throne when the whole of Western Asia was violently disturbed by the commotions which shook the Roman Empire after the murder of Commodus. The virtuous Pertinax was allowed to reign but three months (A.D. 193, January—March). His successor was scarcely proclaimed when in three different quarters the legionaries rose in arms, and, saluting their commanders as 'Emperors,' invested them with the purple. Clodius Albinus, in Britain; Severus, in Pannonia; and Pescennius Niger, in Syria, at one and the same time claimed the place which the wretched Julianus had bought, and prepared themselves to maintain their rights against all who should impugn them. It seems

[1] Reimar and others have supposed that Volagases, the adversary of Severus, was the son of a Sanatrœces, or Sanatruces, on the strength of a fragment of Dio Cassius (lxxv. 9, *ad fin.*). But it is more probable that the fragment refers to a different Volagases, an Armenian prince, contemporary with the Parthian Volagases IV.

that, on the first proclamation of Niger, and before it had become evident that he would have to establish his authority by force of arms, either the Parthian monarch, or at any rate princes who were among his dependants,[1] sent to congratulate the new Emperor on his accession, and to offer him contingents of troops, if he required them. These spontaneous proposals were at the first politely declined, since Niger expected to find himself accepted joyfully as sovereign, and did not look to have to engage in war. When, however, the news reached him that he had formidable competitors, and that Severus, acknowledged Emperor at Rome, was about to set out for the East, at the head of vast forces, he saw that it would be necessary for him, if he were to make head against his powerful rival, to draw together troops from all quarters. Accordingly, towards the close of A.D. 193, he sent envoys to the princes beyond the Euphrates, and especially to the kings of Parthia, Armenia, and Hatra, entreating them to send their troops at once to his aid.[2] Volagases, under these circumstances, appears to have hesitated. He sent an answer that he would issue orders to his satraps for the collection of a force, but made no haste to redeem his promise, and in fact refrained from despatching any body of distinctly Parthian troops to the assistance of Niger in the impending struggle.

While, however, thus abstaining from direct interference in the contest between the two Roman pretenders, Volagases appears to have allowed one of his dependent monarchs to mix himself up in the quarrel. Hatra, at this time the capital of an Arabian com-

[1] Herodian. ii. 31. The expressions used are somewhat vague—οἵ τε ἐπέκεινα Τίγριδος καὶ Εὐφράτου σατράπαι καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐπέστελλον, κ.τ.λ.

[2] Herodian. iii. 1.

munity,[1] and the chief city of central Mesopotamia (or the tract between the Sinjar and the Babylonian alluvium), was a dependency of Parthia, and though, like so many other Parthian dependencies, it possessed its native kings,[2] cannot have been in a position to engage in a great war without permission from the Court of Ctesiphon. When, therefore, we find that Barsemius, the King of Hatra, not only received the envoys of Niger favourably, but actually sent to his aid a body of archers,[3] we must understand that Volagases sanctioned the measure. Probably he thought it prudent to secure the friendship of the pretender whom he expected to be successful, but sought to effect this in the way that would compromise him least if the result of the struggle should be other than he looked for. The sending of his own troops to the camp of Niger would have committed him irretrievably; but the actions of a vassal monarch might with some plausibility be disclaimed.

As the struggle between the two pretenders progressed in the early months of A.D. 194, the nations beyond the Euphrates grew bolder, and allowed themselves to indulge their natural feelings of hostility towards the Romans. The newly subjected Mesopotamians flew to arms, massacred most of the Roman detachments stationed about their country, and laid

[1] Arab tribes from a very early period held portions of Mesopotamia. Xenophon calls the tract between the Khabour and the Babylonian alluvium 'Arabia' (Anab. i. 5, § 1). Strabo assigns the same region to 'Scenite Arabs' (xvi. 1, § 26). Arabs appear in Upper Mesopotamia about the time of Pompey (Dio Cass. xxxv. 2). Osrhoëné is reckoned as Arabian by Plutarch (*Crass.* § 21), and Appian (*Parth.* p. 140, A). Hatra, or Atra (now el-Hadhr), is first mentioned in the wars of Trajan, and is always said to be Arabian. (See Dio Cass. lxviii. 31; lxxv. 10–12; Herodian. iii. 28; &c.)

[2] Herodian. iii. 1 and 27.

[3] Ibid. iii. 1.

siege to Nisibis,[1] which since the cession Rome had made her head-quarters. The natives of the region were assisted by their kindred races across the Tigris, particularly by the people of Adiabêné,[2] who, like the Arabs of Hatra, were Parthian vassals. Severus had no sooner overcome his rival and slain him, than he hastened eastward with the object of relieving the troops shut up in Nisibis, and of chastising the rebels and their abettors. It was in vain that the Mesopotamians sought to disarm his resentment by declaring that they had taken up arms in his cause, and had been only anxious to distress and injure the partisans of his antagonist. Though they sent ambassadors to him with presents, and offered to make restitution of the Roman spoil still in their hands, and of the Roman prisoners, it was observed that they said nothing about restoring the strongholds which they had taken, or resuming the position of Roman tributaries. On the contrary, they required that all Roman soldiers still in their country should be withdrawn from it, and that their independence should henceforth be respected.[3] As Severus was not inclined to surrender Roman territory without a contest, war was at once declared. His immediate adversaries were of no great account, being, as they were, the petty kings of Osrhoêné, Adiabêné, and Hatra; but behind them loomed the massive form of the Parthian State, which was attacked through them, and could not be indifferent to their fortunes.

In the spring of A.D. 195, Severus, at the head of his troops, crossed the Euphrates in person, and taking

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[1] Dio Cass. lxxv. 1.

[2] Ibid. Οἱ μὲν Ὀσροηνοὶ καὶ οἱ Ἀδιαβηνοὶ ἀποστάντες καὶ Νισιβιν πολιορκοῦντες, κ.τ.λ.

[3] Ibid.

up his own quarters at Nisibis, which the Mesopotamians had been unable to capture, proceeded to employ his generals in the reduction of the rebels and the castigation of their aiders and abettors. Though his men suffered considerably from the scarcity and badness of the water,[1] yet he seems to have found no great difficulty in reducing Mesopotamia once more into subjection. Having brought it completely under, and formally made Nisibis the capital, at the same time raising it to the dignified position of a Roman colony,[2] he caused his troops to cross the Tigris into Adiabêné, and, though the inhabitants offered a stout resistance, succeeded in making himself master of the country.[3] The Parthian monarch seems to have made no effort to prevent the occupation of this province. He stood probably on the defensive, expecting to be attacked, in or near his capital. But Severus could not afford to remain in these remote regions. He had still a rival in the West in the person of Clodius Albinus, who might be expected to descend upon Italy, if it were left exposed to his attacks much longer. He therefore quitted

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[1] Dio tells a story, which has a somewhat apocryphal air, to illustrate the sufferings of the army. An especially dry summer had, he tells us, caused the springs generally to fail, and the troops on their way through the desert were so parched with drought, and so choked with dust, that they could no longer converse, but could barely articulate 'Water, water.' At length they reached a well, but the water was so foul that at first none would drink it. Seeing this, Severus caused a goblet to be filled for himself, and in the sight of the troops swallowed the whole at a draught. The men then consented to drink and were refreshed. (Dio Cass. lxxv. 2.)

[2] Dio says vaguely that Severus 'gave dignity' to Nisibis (lxxv. 3, ἀξίωμα τῇ Νισίβει δούς). The nature of the dignity appears from the coins, which give Nisibis the titles of ΚΟΛΩΝΙΑ and ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ. (See Mionnet, *Description, &c.*, tom. v. pp. 625–628.)

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c. Compare Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 9. In commemoration of these successes Severus took the epithets of Arabicus and Adiabenicus, which are frequent in his inscriptions and on his coins. (See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 196.)

the East early in A.D. 196, and returned to Rome with all speed, leaving Parthia very insufficiently chastised, and his new conquests very incompletely settled.

Scarcely was he gone when the war broke out with greater violence than ever. Volagases took the offensive, recovered Adiabêné, and crossing the Tigris into Mesopotamia, swept the Romans from the open country. Nisibis alone, which two years before had defied all the efforts of the Mesopotamians, held out against him, and even this stronghold was within a little of being taken.[1] According to one writer,[2] the triumphant Parthians even crossed the Euphrates, and once more spread themselves over the fertile plains of Syria. Severus was forced in A.D. 197 to make a second Eastern expedition, to recover his lost glory and justify the titles which he had taken. On his first arrival in Syria, he contented himself with expelling the Parthians from the province, nor was it till late in the year,[3] that, having first made ample preparation, he crossed the Euphrates into Mesopotamia.

The success of any expedition against Parthia depended greatly on the dispositions of the semi-dependent princes, who possessed territories bordering upon those of the two great empires. Among these the most important were at this time the kings of Armenia and Osrhoëné. Armenia had at the period of Niger's attempt been solicited by his emissaries; but its monarch had then refused to take any part in the civil conflict.[4] Subsequently, however, he in some way

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[1] See Dio Cass. lxxv. 9.

[2] Spartianus. See his 'Life of Severus,' § 15, where we are told that Severus, as soon as he arrived in Syria, 'Parthos *summovit*.'

[3] 'Æstate igitur jam exeunte ingressus,' &c. (Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 16, ad init.)

[4] Herodian. iii. 1.

offended Severus, who, when he reached the East, regarded Armenia as a hostile State requiring instant subjugation.[1] It seems to have been in the summer of A.D. 197, soon after his first arrival in Syria, that Severus despatched a force against the Armenian prince, who was named (like the Parthian monarch of the time) Volagases. That prince mustered his troops and met the invaders at the frontier of his kingdom. A battle seemed imminent; but ere the fortune of war was tried the Armenian made an application for a truce, which was granted by the Roman leaders. A breathing-space being thus gained, Volagases sent ambassadors with presents and hostages to the Roman emperor in Syria, professed to be animated by friendly feelings towards Rome, and entreated Severus to allow him terms of peace. Severus permitted himself to be persuaded; a formal treaty was made, and the Armenian prince even received an enlargement of his previous territory at the hands of his mollified suzerain.[2]

The Osrhoënian monarch, who bore the usual name of Abgarus, made a more complete and absolute submission. He came in person into the emperor's camp, accompanied by a numerous body of archers, and bringing with him his sons as hostages.[3] Severus must have hailed with especial satisfaction the adhesion of this chieftain, which secured him the undisturbed possession of Western Mesopotamia as far as the junction of the Khabour with the Euphrates. It was his design to proceed himself by the Euphrates route,[4] while he

[1] Compare on this subject Herodian. iii. 27 with Dio Cass. lxxv. 9.

[2] This is to be gathered from the expression of Dio (lxxv. 9, ad fin. *μέρος τε τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἐπὶ τῇ εἰρήνῃ ἐχαρίσατο*), which must denote the cession to Volagases of some part of the *Roman* Armenia (Armenia Minor).

[3] Herodian. iii. 27, ad fin.

[4] Dio Cass. lxxv. 9.

sent detachments under other leaders to ravage Eastern Mesopotamia and Adiabêné,[1] which had evidently been re-occupied by the Parthians. To secure his army from want, he determined, like Trajan,[2] to build a fleet of ships in Upper Mesopotamia, where suitable timber abounded, and to march his army down the left bank of the Euphrates into Babylonia, while his transports, laden with stores, descended the course of the river.[3] In this way he reached the neighbourhood of Ctesiphon without suffering any loss, and easily captured the two great cities of Babylon and Seleucia, which on his approach were evacuated by their garrisons. He then proceeded to the attack of Ctesiphon itself, passing his ships probably through one of the canals which united the Tigris with the Euphrates, or else (like Trajan) conveying them on rollers across the neck of land which separates the two rivers.

Volagases had taken up his own position at Ctesiphon, bent on defending his capital. It is possible that the approach of Severus by the line of march which he pursued was unexpected,[4] and that the sudden presence of the Romans before the walls of Ctesiphon came upon the Parthian monarch as a surprise. He seems, at any rate, to have made but a poor resistance. It may be gathered, indeed, from one author[5] that he met the invaders in the open field, and fought a battle in defence of Ctesiphon before allowing himself to be shut up within its walls. But after the city

[1] This seems to be the only way of reconciling Dio (lxxv. 9) with Herodian (iii. 28, ad init.).

[2] See above, page 310.

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[4] Herodian's narrative is absurd as it stands; but there may be some truth in his statement that the Romans found the Parthians unprepared (προσπεσόντες οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ἀπαρασκευάστοις τοῖς βαρβάροις, iii. 30).

[5] Spartianus (*Sev. Imp.* § 16. 'Ctesiphontem *pulso rege* pervenit').

was once invested it appears to have been quickly taken. We hear of no such resistance as that which was soon afterwards offered by Hatra. The soldiers of Severus succeeded in storming Ctesiphon on the first assault; the Parthian monarch betook himself to flight, accompanied by a few horsemen;[1] and the seat of empire thus fell easily—a second time within the space of eighty-two years—into the hands of a foreign invader. The treatment of the city was such as we might expect from the ordinary character of Roman warfare. A general massacre of the male population was made. The soldiers were allowed to plunder both the public and the private buildings at their pleasure. The precious metals accumulated in the royal treasury were seized, and the chief ornaments of the palace were taken and carried off. Nor did blood and plunder content the victors. After slaughtering the adult males they made prize of the women and children, who were torn from their homes without compunction and led into captivity, to the number of a hundred thousand.[2]

Notwithstanding the precautions which he had taken, Severus appears to have become straitened for supplies about the time that he captured Ctesiphon. His soldiers were compelled for some days to exist on roots, which produced a dangerous dysentery.[3] He found himself unable to pursue Volagases,[4] and recognised the necessity of retreating before disaster overtook him. He could not, however, return by the route of

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[1] Herodian. l.s.c. Dio implies the flight of Volagases, when he says οὐ μέντοι οὔτε τὸν Οὐολόγαισον ἐπεδίωξεν [ὁ Σεβῆρος].

[2] Compare Dio Cass. lxxv. 9 with Herodian. iii. 30; and see also Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 16: 'Oppidum cepit, et regem fugavit, et *plurimos interemit*.'

[3] Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 16.

[4] Ibid. 'Longius ire non potuit.' Dio, however, expresses surprise that no pursuit was attempted.

the Euphrates, since his army had upon its advance completely exhausted the resources of the Euphrates region.[1] The line of the Tigris was therefore preferred for the retreat; and while the ships with difficulty made their way up the course of the stream, the army pursued its march upon the banks, without, so far as appears, any molestation. It happened, however, that the route selected led Severus near to the small state of Hatra, which had given him special offence by supporting the cause of his rival, Niger; and it seemed to him of importance that the inhabitants should receive condign punishment for this act of audacity. He may also have hoped to eclipse the fame of Trajan by the capture of a town which had successfully resisted that hero.[2] He therefore stopped his march in order to lay siege to the place, which he attacked with military engines, and with all the other offensive means known at the time to the Romans. His first attempt was, however, easily repulsed.[3] The walls of the town were strong, its defenders brave and full of enterprise. They burnt the siege-machines brought against them, and committed great havoc among the soldiers. Under these circumstances disorders broke out among the besiegers; mutinous words were heard; and the emperor thought himself compelled to have recourse to severe measures of repression. Having put to death two of his chief officers,[4] and then found it necessary to

[1] Dio Cass. lxxv. 9.

[2] See above, p. 315.

[3] Dio Cass. lxxv. 10. It is uncertain whether Herodian means to describe the first or second attack. He mentions one siege only, and places it before that of Ctesiphon (iii. 28, 29); but the narrative of Dio, which is at once more minute, and internally more probable, seems preferable.

[4] One of these was Lætus, who a little earlier had saved Nisibis (supra, p. 338, note [1]). Severus (according to Dio) grew jealous of him, because the soldiers declared that they would follow no other leader. Marius Maximus, how-

deny that he had given orders for the execution of one of them, he broke up from before the place and removed his camp to a distance.

He had not, however, as yet relinquished the hope of bringing his enterprise to a successful issue. In the security of his distant camp he constructed fresh engines in increased numbers, collected an abundant supply of provisions, and made every preparation for renewing the siege with effect at no remote period.[1] The treasures stored up in the city were reported to be great, especially those which the piety of successive generations had accumulated in the Temple of the Sun.[2] This rich booty appealed forcibly to the cupidity of the emperor, while his honour seemed to require that he should not suffer a comparatively petty town to defy his arms with impunity. He, therefore, after a short absence retraced his steps, and appeared a second time before Hatra with a stronger siege-train and a better appointed army than before. But the Hatreni met his attack with a resolution equal to his own. They were excellent archers; they possessed a powerful force of cavalry; they knew their walls to be strong; and they were masters of a peculiar kind of fire, which was calculated to terrify and alarm, if not greatly to injure, an enemy unacquainted with its qualities.[3] Severus once more lost almost all his machines; the Hatrene cavalry severely handled his foragers; his men for a long time made but little impression upon the walls, while they suffered grievously from the

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ever, assigned his death to a different cause, and placed it earlier. (See Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 15.)

[1] Dio Cass. lxxv. 11.

[2] Ibid. lxxv. 12. The ruins of this temple still exist at El Hadhr. (See the Frontispiece to this volume.)

[3] The combustible material used is said to have been naphtha, the flame of which was thought to be almost inextinguishable. (Dio Cass. Fr. 175, § 2; lxxv. 11. Compare Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6, p. 406.)

enemy's slingers[1] and archers, from his warlike engines, and especially, we are told, from the fiery darts which were rained upon them incessantly.[2] However, after enduring these various calamities for a length of time, the perseverance of the Romans was rewarded by the formation of a practicable breach in the outer wall; and the soldiers demanded to be led to the assault, confident in their power to force an entrance and carry the place.[3] But the emperor resisted their inclination. He did not wish that the city should be stormed, since in that case it must have been given up to indiscriminate pillage, and the treasures which he coveted would have become the prey of the soldiery. The Hatreni, he thought, would make their submission, if he only gave them a little time, now that they must see further resistance to be hopeless. He waited therefore a day, expecting an offer of surrender. But the Hatreni made no sign, and in the night restored their wall where it had been broken down. Severus then made up his mind to sacrifice the treasures on which his heart had been set, and, albeit with reluctance, gave the word for the assault. But now the legionaries refused. They had been forbidden to attack when success was certain and the danger trivial—they were now required to imperil their lives while the result could not but be doubtful. Perhaps they divined the emperor's motive in withholding them from the assault, and resented it; at any rate they openly declined to execute his orders. After a vain attempt to force an entrance by means of his Asiatic allies, Severus desisted from his undertaking. The summer was far

[1] Herodian. iii. 28.
[2] Dio Cass. lxxv. 11, ad fin.
[3] Ibid. ch. 12.

advanced;[1] the heat was great; disease had broken out among his troops; above all, they had become demoralised, and their obedience could no longer be depended on.[2] Severus broke up from before Hatra a second time, after having besieged it for twenty days,[3] and returned—by what route we are not told—into Syria.

Nothing is more surprising in the history of this campaign than the inaction and apparent apathy of the Parthians. Volagases, after quitting his capital, seems to have made no effort at all to hamper or harass his adversary. The prolonged resistance of Hatra, the sufferings of the Romans, their increasing difficulties with respect to provisions, the injurious effect of the summer heats upon their unacclimatised constitutions, would have been irresistible temptations to a prince of any spirit or energy, inducing him to advance as the Romans retired, to hang upon their rear, to cut off their supplies, and to render their retreat difficult, if not disastrous. Volagases appears to have remained wholly inert and passive. His conduct is only explicable by the consideration of the rapid decline which Parthia was now undergoing, of the general decay of patriotic spirit, and the sea of difficulties into which a monarch was plunged who had to retreat before an invader.

The expedition of Severus was on the whole glorious for Rome, and disastrous for Parthia, though the glory

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[1] Spartian tells us (*Sev. Imp.* § 16) that Ctesiphon was taken at the beginning of winter ('hiemali prope tempore'). Herodian places the siege of Hatra at the time of the great heats (iii. 28).

[2] Dio says that one of the officers of Severus offered to take Hatra if 550 European troops were placed at his disposal. The reply of Severus was, 'Whence am I to get such a number of soldiers?'

[3] Dio Cass. lxxv. 13.

of the victor was tarnished at the close by his failure before Hatra. It cost Parthia a second province. The Roman emperor not only recovered his previous position in Mesopotamia, but overstepping the Tigris, established the Roman dominion firmly in the fertile tract between that stream and the Zagros mountain-range. The title of 'Adiabenicus' became no empty boast. Adiabêné, or the tract between the Zab rivers—probably including at this time the entire low region at the foot of Zagros from the eastern Khabour on the north to the Adhem towards the south—passed under the dominion of Rome, the monarch of the country, hitherto a Parthian vassal, becoming her tributary.[1] Thus the imperial standards were planted permanently at a distance less than a degree from the Parthian capital, which, with the great cities of Seleucia and Babylon in its neighbourhood, was exposed to be captured almost at any moment by a sudden and rapid inroad.

Volagases survived his defeat by Severus about ten or eleven years. For this space Parthian history is once more a blank, our authorities containing no notice that directly touches Parthia during the period in question. The stay of Severus in the East,[2] during the years A.D. 200 and 201, would seem to indicate that the condition of the Oriental provinces was unsettled and required the presence of the Imperator. But we hear of no effort made by Parthia at this time to recover her losses—of no further collision between her troops and those of Rome; and we may assume

[1] Spartian. *Sev. Imp.* § 18:—'Adiabenos in tributarios coegit.' This authority is superior to that of Aurelius Victor, who says—'Adiabena quoque, *ni terrarum macies despectaretur*, in tributarios *concessisset*.' (*De Cæs.* § 20.)

[2] See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. . pp. 204–208.

therefore that peace was preserved, and that the Parthian monarch acquiesced, however unwillingly, in the curtailment of his territory. Probably internal, no less than external, difficulties pressed upon him. The diminution of Parthian prestige which had been brought about by the successive victories of Trajan, Avidius Cassius, and Severus, must have loosened the ties which bound to Parthia the several vassal kingdoms. Her suzerainty had been accepted as that of the Asiatic nation most competent to make head against European intruders, and secure the native races in continued independence of a wholly alien power.[1] It may well have appeared at this time to the various vassal states that the Parthian vigour had become effete, that the qualities which had advanced the race to the leadership of Western Asia were gone, and that unless some new power could be raised up to act energetically against Rome, the West would obtain complete dominion over the East, and Asia be absorbed into Europe. Thoughts of this kind, fermenting among the subject populations, would produce a general debility, a want both of power and of inclination to make any combined effort, a desire to wait until an opportunity of acting with effect should offer. Hence probably the deadness and apathy which characterise this period, and which seem at first sight so astonishing. Distrust of their actual leader paralysed the nations of Western Asia, and they did not as yet see their way clearly towards placing themselves under any other guidance.

Volagases IV. reigned till A.D. 208–9, dying thus about two years before his great adversary, who expired[2] at York, February 4, A.D. 211.

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[1] See above, p. 42.

[2] Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 218.

CHAPTER XXI.

Struggle between the two Sons of Volagases IV., Volagases V. and Artabanus. Continued Sovereignty of both Princes. Ambition of Caracallus. His Proceedings in the East. His Resolve to quarrel with Parthia. First Proposal made by him to Artabanus. Perplexity of Artabanus. Caracallus invades Parthia. His Successes, and Death. Macrinus, defeated by Artabanus, consents to Terms of Peace. Revolt of the Persians under Artaxerxes. Prolonged Struggle. Death of Artabanus, and Downfall of the Parthian Empire.

Τελευταῖος γέγονεν ὁ Ἀρτάβανος.—Dio Cass. lxxx. 3.

On the death of Volagases IV., the Parthian crown was disputed between his two sons, Artabanus and Volagases. According to the classical writers, the contest resulted in favour of the former, whom they regard as undisputed sovereign of the Parthians, at any rate from the year A.D. 216.[1] It appears, however, from the Parthian coins, that both the brothers claimed and exercised sovereignty during the entire term of seventeen or eighteen years which intervened between the death of Volagases IV. and the revolt of the Persians.[2] Artabanus must beyond all doubt have acquired the sole rule in the western portions of the empire, since (from A.D. 216 to A.D. 226) he was the only monarch known to the Romans. But Volagases may at the same time have been recognised in the

[1] The negotiations between Caracallus and Artabanus, which Herodian describes (iv. 18-20), must have taken place in the course of this year. (See Clinton, *F. R.* vol. i. p. 224.)

[2] See Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, pp. 113, 114.

more eastern provinces, and may have maintained himself in power in those remote regions without interfering with his brother's dominion in the West. Still this division of the empire must naturally have tended to weaken it; and the position of Volagases has to be taken into account in estimating the difficulties under which the last monarch of the Arsacid series found himself placed—difficulties, to which, after a struggle, he was at last forced to succumb. Domestic dissension, wars with a powerful neighbour (Rome), and internal disaffection and rebellion formed a combination, against which the last Parthian monarch, albeit a man of considerable energy, strove in vain. But he strove bravely; and the closing scenes of the empire, in which he bore the chief part, are not unworthy of its best and palmiest days.

An actual civil war appears to have raged between the two brothers for some years. Caracallus, who in A.D. 211 succeeded his father, Severus, as Emperor of Rome, congratulated the Senate in A.D. 212 on the strife still going on in Parthia, which could not fail (he said) to inflict serious injury on that hostile state.[1] The balance of advantage seems at first to have inclined towards Volagases, whom Caracallus acknowledged as monarch of Parthia[2] in the year A.D. 215. But soon after this the fortune of war must have turned; for subsequently to the year A.D. 215, we hear nothing more of Volagases, but find Caracallus negotiating with Artabanus instead, and treating with him as undisputed monarch of the entire Parthian empire.[3]

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[1] Dio Cass. lxxvii. 12.

[2] Ibid. lxxvii. 19 and 21. The Πάρθος of the latter chapter must, it would seem, be the Οὐολόγαισος of the former.

[3] Herodian. l. s. c. Dio Cass. lxxviii. 1.

That this was not his real position, appears from the coins; but the classical evidence may be accepted as showing that from the year A.D. 216, Volagases ceased to have much power, sinking from the rank of a rival monarch into that of a mere pretender, who may have caused some trouble to the established sovereign, but did not inspire serious alarm.

Artabanus, having succeeded in reducing his brother to this condition, and obtained a general acknowledgment of his claims, found himself almost immediately in circumstances of much difficulty. From the moment of his accession, Caracallus had exhibited an inordinate ambition; and this ambition had early taken the shape of a special desire for the glory of Oriental conquests. The weak and dissolute son of Severus fancied himself, and called himself, a second Alexander;[1] and thus he was in honour bound to imitate that hero's marvellous exploits. The extension of the Roman territory towards the East became very soon his great object, and he shrank from no steps however base and dishonourable, which promised to conduce towards the accomplishment of his wishes. As early as A.D. 212 he summoned Abgarus, the tributary king of Osrhoëné, into his presence, and when he unsuspectingly complied, seized him, threw him into prison, and declaring his territories forfeited, reduced them into the form of a Roman province.[2] Successful in this bold proceeding, he attempted to deal with Armenia in the same way; but, though the monarch fell foolishly into the trap set for him, the nation was not so easily managed. The Armenians flew to arms on learning the imprisonment of their

[1] Dio Cass. lxxvii. 22; Herodian. iv. 13; Spanheim, *De Usu Numism.* Diss. xii.

[2] Dio Cass. lxxvii. 12 (Compare Gibbon, vol. i. p. 343; Smith's edition.)

king and royal family;[1] and when, three years afterwards (A.D. 215), Caracallus sent a Roman army under Theocritus, one of his favourites, to chastise them, they inflicted a severe defeat on their assailant.[2] But the desire of Caracallus to effect Oriental conquests was increased, rather than diminished, by this occurrence. He had sought a quarrel with Parthia as early as A.D. 214, when he demanded of Volagases the surrender of two refugees of distinction.[3] The rupture, which he courted, was deferred by the discreditable compliance of the Great King with his requisition.[4] Volagases surrendered the two unfortunates; and the Roman Emperor was compelled to declare himself satisfied with the concession. But a year had not elapsed before he had devised a new plan of attack and proceeded to put it in execution.

Volagases V. was about this time compelled to yield the western capital to his brother; and Artabanus IV. became the representative of Parthian power in the eyes of the Romans. Caracallus in the summer of A.D. 215, having transferred his residence from Nicomedia to Antioch, sent ambassadors from the last-named place to Artabanus, who were to present the Parthian monarch with presents of unusual magnificence,[5] and to make him an unheard-of proposition. 'The Roman Emperor,' said the despatch with which they were intrusted, 'could not fitly wed the daughter of a subject or accept the position of son-in-law to a private person. No one could be a suitable wife to him who was

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[1] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[2] Ibid. lxxvii. 21.

[3] These were a certain Tiridates, who seems to have been an Armenian prince, and a Cynic philosopher, named Antiochus (Dio Cass. lxxvii. 19).

[4] Ibid. lxxvii. 21.

[5] Herodian. iv. 18:—Πέμπει δὲ πρεσβείαν καὶ δῶρα πάσης ὕλης τε πολυτελοῦς καὶ τέχνης ποικίλης.

not a princess. He therefore asked the Parthian monarch for the hand of his daughter. Rome and Parthia divided between them the sovereignty of the world; united, as they would be by this marriage, no longer recognising any boundary as separating them, they would constitute a power that could not but be irresistible. It would be easy for them to reduce under their sway all the barbarous races on the skirts of their empires, and to hold them in subjection by a flexible system of administration and government. The Roman infantry was the best in the world, and in steady hand-to-hand fighting must be allowed to be unrivalled. The Parthians surpassed all nations in the number of their cavalry and in the excellency of their archers. If these advantages, instead of being separated, were combined, and the various elements on which success in war depends were thus brought into harmonious union, there could be no difficulty in establishing and maintaining a universal monarchy. Were that done, the Parthian spices and rare stuffs, as also the Roman metals and manufactures, would no longer need to be imported secretly and in small quantities by merchants, but, as the two countries would form together but one nation and one state, there would be a free interchange among all the citizens of their various products and commodities.'[1]

The recital of this despatch threw the Parthian monarch into extreme perplexity. He did not believe that the proposals made to him were serious, or intended to have an honourable issue. The project broached appeared to him altogether extravagant, and such as no one in his senses could entertain for a

[1] Herodian. iv. 18.

moment. Yet he was anxious not to offend the master of two-and-thirty legions,[1] nor even to give him a pretext for a rupture of amicable relations. Accordingly he temporised, contenting himself with setting forth some objections to the request of Caracallus, and asking to be excused compliance with it.[2] 'Such a union, as Caracallus proposed, could scarcely,' he said, 'prove a happy one. The wife and husband, differing in language, habits, and mode of life, could not but become estranged from one another. There was no lack of patricians at Rome, possessing daughters with whom the emperor might wed as suitably as the Parthian kings did with the females of their own royal house. It was not fit that either family should sully its blood by mixture with the other.'

There is some doubt whether Caracallus construed this response as an absolute refusal, and thereupon undertook his expedition, or whether he regarded it as inviting further negotiation, and sent a second embassy, whose arguments and persuasions induced Artabanus to consent to the proposed alliance. The contemporary historian, Dio, states positively that Artabanus refused to give his daughter to the Roman monarch, and that Caracallus undertook his expedition to avenge this insult;[3] but Herodian, another contemporary, declares exactly the reverse. According to him, the Roman Emperor, on receiving the reply of Artabanus, sent a new embassy to urge his suit, and to protest with oaths that he was in earnest and had the most friendly intentions. Artabanus upon this yielded, addressed Caracallus as his son-in-law, and invited him

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[1] See Dio Cass. lv. 23, 24.

[2] Τὰ μὲν πρῶτα τοιαῦτα ἐπιστέλλων, παρητεῖτο. (Herodian. iv. 19.)

[3] Dio Cass. lxviii. 1.

to come and fetch home his bride. Herodian describes with much minuteness, and with a good deal of picturesque effect, the stately march of the Imperial prince through the Parthian territory, the magnificent welcome which he received, and the peaceful meeting of the two kings in the plain before Ctesiphon, which was suddenly interrupted by the meditated treason of the crafty Roman. Taken at disadvantage, the Parthian monarch with difficulty escaped, while his soldiers and other subjects, incapable of making any resistance, were slaughtered like sheep by their assailants, who then plundered and ravaged the Parthian territory at their will, and returned laden with spoil into Mesopotamia.[1] In general, Dio is a more trustworthy

[1] Herodian. iv. 20. The full passage in Herodian is as follows:—'But when Antoninus urged his request, and added fresh gifts and oaths in confirmation of his serious meaning and real friendliness, the Barbarian yielded, and promised to give him his daughter, and addressed him as his future son-in-law. Now, when this was noised abroad, the Parthians made ready to receive the Roman monarch, and were transported with joy at the prospect of an eternal peace. Antoninus thereupon crossed the rivers without hindrance, and entered Parthia, just as if it were his own land. Everywhere along his route the people greeted him with sacrifices, and dressing their altars with garlands, offered upon them all manner of spices and incense; whereat he made pretence of being vastly pleased. As his journey now approached its close, and he drew near to the Parthian Court, Artabanus, instead of awaiting his arrival, went out and met him in the spacious plain before the city, with intent to entertain his daughter's bridegroom and his own son-in-law. Meanwhile the whole multitude of the barbarians, crowned with freshly gathered flowers, and clad in garments worked with gold and variously dyed, were keeping holiday, and dancing gracefully to the sound of the flute, the pipe, and the drum, an amusement wherein they take great delight after they have indulged freely in wine. Now, after all the people had come together, they got off their horses, hung up their quivers and their bows, and gave themselves wholly to libations and revels. The concourse of barbarians was very great, and they stood arranged in no order, since they did not apprehend any danger, but were all endeavouring to catch a sight of the bridegroom. Suddenly Antoninus gives his men the signal to fall on, and massacre the barbarians. These, amazed at the attack, and finding themselves struck and wounded, forthwith took to flight. Artabanus was hurried away by his guards, and put on a horse,' whereby he escaped with a few followers. The rest of the barbarians were cut to pieces, since they could not reach their

authority than Herodian, and most moderns have therefore preferred his version of the story.[1] But it may be questioned whether in this particular case the truth has not been best preserved by the historian on whom under ordinary circumstances we place less dependence. If so disgraceful an outrage as that described by Herodian was, indeed, committed by the head of the Roman State on a foreign potentate, Dio, as a great State official, would naturally be anxious to gloss it over. There are, moreover, internal difficulties in his narrative;[2] and on more than one point of importance he contradicts not only Herodian, but also Spartianus.[3] It is therefore not improbable that Herodian has given with most truth the general outline of the expedition

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horses, which, when they dismounted, they had allowed to graze freely over the plain; nor were they able to make use of their legs, since these were entangled in the long flowing garments which descended to their heels. Many too had come without quivers or bows, as they were not wanted at a wedding. Antoninus, when he had made a vast slaughter, and taken a multitude of prisoners, and a rich booty, moved off without meeting any resistance. He allowed his soldiers to burn all the cities and villages, and to carry away as plunder whatever they chose.' No doubt this passage contains a good deal of rhetoric; but it describes a scene which we can scarcely suppose to be imaginary.

[1] Ramsay in Smith's *Biog. Dict.* vol. i. p. 608; Champagny, *Les Césars du 3me. Siècle*, vol. i. p. 385, &c.

[2] There is something suspicious in the extreme brevity of Dio's narrative (lxxviii. 1), and in his statement that he has nothing important to tell of the war beyond the fact that when two soldiers were quarreling over a wine-skin, Caracallus ordered them to cut it in two with their swords, and they obeyed him. His account of the war in this place does not harmonise with his statement in ch. 26, that Artabanus was violently angry at the treatment which he had received and determined to resent it. Again, the price which he allows that Macrinus paid for peace (ch. 27), is altogether exorbitant unless it was agreed to as compensation for some extraordinary outrage.

[3] Dio says that there was no engagement at all between the Parthians and the Romans (lxxviii. 1). Spartianus speaks of a battle in which Caracallus defeated the Satraps of Artabanus (*Ant. Caracall.* § 6). Dio makes the countries invaded Adiabêné and Media. Spartianus indicates a more southern locality by saying that the invading army passed through Babylonia. ('per Babylonios,' l.s.c.)

of Caracallus, though, with that love of effect which characterises him, he may have unduly embellished the narrative.

The advance of Caracallus was, if Spartianus is to be believed, through Babylonia.[1] The return may have been (as Dio seems to indicate that it was[2]) by the way of the Tigris, through Adiabêné and Upper Mesopotamia. It was doubtless on the return that Caracallus committed a second and wholly wanton outrage upon the feelings of his adversary, by violating the sanctity of the Parthian royal sepulchres, and dispersing their contents to the four winds. These tombs were situated at Arbela, in Adiabêné, a place which seems to have been always regarded as in some sort a City of the Dead.[3] The useless insult and impiety were worthy of one who, like Caracallus, was 'equally devoid of judgment and humanity,' and who has been pronounced by the most unimpassioned of historians to have been 'the common enemy of mankind.'[4] A severe reckoning was afterwards exacted for the indignity, which was felt by the Parthians with all the keenness wherewith Orientals are wont to regard any infringement of the sanctity of the grave.

Caracallus appears to have passed the winter at Edessa, amusing himself with hunting and charioteering after the fatigues of his campaign.[5] In the spring

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[1] Spartianus says, 'per *Cadusios* et Babylonios' (*Ant. Caracall.* § 6); but this is impossible, since the Cadusii lay upon the Caspian.

[2] Dio Cass. lxxviii. 1. The mention of Arbela indicates this route.

[3] Assyrian and Persian monarchs constantly conveyed to Arbela great criminals to be executed there. (See the *Journal of As. Society* for 1865, p. 195, note [17].) Rabbinical tradition placed there the tomb of Seth. (Schindler's *Pentaglott*, col. 144.)

[4] See Gibbon, vol. i. p. 272 (Smith's edition). Both the phrases quoted are used by this writer.

[5] Herodian. iv. 21; Spartian. *Ant. Car.* § 6.

he threatened another advance into Parthian territory, and threw the Medes and Parthians into great alarm.[1] He had not, however, the opportunity of renewing his attack. On April 8, A.D. 217, having quitted Edessa with a small retinue for the purpose of visiting a famous temple of the Moon-God near Carrhæ, he was surprised and murdered on the way by Julius Martialis, one of his guards.[2] His successor, Macrinus, though a Prætorian prefect, was no soldier, and would willingly have retired at once from the war. But the passions of the Parthians had been roused. Artabanus possessed the energy and spirit which most of the recent monarchs had lacked; and though defeated when taken at disadvantage, and unable for some months to obtain any revenge, had employed the winter in the collection of a vast army, and was determined to exact a heavy retribution for the treacherous massacre of Ctesiphon and the wanton impiety of Arbela. He had already taken the field and conducted his troops to the neighbourhood of the Roman frontier when Caracallus lost his life. Macrinus was scarcely acknowledged emperor when he found that the Parthians were close at hand, that the frontier was crossed, and that unless a treaty could be concluded he must risk a battle.[3]

Under these circumstances the unwarlike emperor hurriedly sent ambassadors to the Parthian camp, with an offer to restore all the prisoners made in the late campaign as the price of peace. Artabanus unhesitatingly rejected the overture, but at the same time informed his adversary of the terms on which he was willing to treat. Macrinus, he said, must not only re-

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[1] Dio Cass. lxxviii. 3.

[2] Ibid. lxxviii. 5; Herodian. iv. viii. 11.

[3] Herodian. iv. 27; Dio Cass. 24; Spart. l. s. c.; Eutrop. *Brev.* lxxviii. 26.

store the prisoners, but must also consent to rebuild all the towns and castles which Caracallus had laid in ruins, must make compensation for the injury done to the tombs of the kings, and further must cede Mesopotamia to the Parthians.[1] It was impossible for a Roman Emperor to consent to such demands without first trying the fortune of war, and Macrinus accordingly made up his mind to fight a battle. The Parthian prince had by this time advanced as far as Nisibis, and it was in the neighbourhood of that city that the great struggle took place.

The battle of Nisibis, which terminated the long contest between Rome and Parthia, was the fiercest and best-contested which was ever fought between the rival powers. It lasted for the space of three days.[2] The army of Artabanus was numerous and well-appointed: like almost every Parthian force, it was strong in cavalry and archers; and it had moreover a novel addition of considerable importance, consisting of a corps of picked soldiers, clad in complete armour, and carrying long spears or lances, who were mounted on camels.[3] The Roman legionaries were supported by numerous light-armed troops, and a powerful body of Mauritanian cavalry.[4] According to Dio, the first engagement was brought on accidentally by a contest which arose among the soldiers for the possession of a watering-place.[5] Herodian tells us that it commenced with a fierce assault of the Parthian cavalry, who charged the Romans with loud shouts, and poured into their ranks flight after flight of arrows. A long

[1] Dio Cass. lxxviii. 26.

[2] I follow here the narrative of Herodian (iv. 30), since the passage of Dio which contained an account of the struggle is too much mutilated to be intelligible.

[3] Herodian. iv. 28.

[4] Ibid. iv. 30 (p. 172).

[5] Dio Cass. lxxviii. 26.

struggle followed. The Romans suffered greatly from the bows of the horse-archers, and from the lances of the corps mounted on camels; and though, when they could reach their enemy, they had always the superiority in close combat, yet after a while their losses from the cavalry and camels forced them to retreat. As they retired they strewed the ground with spiked balls and other contrivances for injuring the feet of animals; and this stratagem was so far successful that the pursuers soon found themselves in difficulties, and the armies respectively retired, without any decisive result, to their camps.

The next day there was again a combat from morning to night, of which we have no description, but which equally terminated without any clear advantage to either side.[1] The fight was then renewed for the third time on the third day, with the difference that the Parthians now directed all their efforts towards surrounding the enemy, and thus capturing their entire force.[2] As they greatly outnumbered the Romans, these last found themselves compelled to extend their line unduly, in order to meet the Parthian tactics; and the weakness of the extended line seems to have given the Parthians an opportunity of throwing it into confusion, and thus causing the Roman defeat.[3] Macrinus took to flight among the first; and his hasty retreat discouraged his troops,[4] who soon afterwards acknowledged themselves beaten, and retired within the lines of their camp. Both armies had suffered severely.

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[1] Herodian. iv. 30 (p. 173).

[2] So Herodian, l.s.c.

[3] Herodian makes the third day's battle terminate, like those of the two preceding days, without decisive result; but Dio evidently regarded the Romans as vanquished.

[4] See the fragment of Dio, which (as restored by Fabricius) reads thus:—*τῇ τοῦ Μακρίνου φυγῇ ἀτυμησάμενοι ἡττήθησαν.*

Herodian describes the heaps of dead as piled to such a height that the manœuvres of the troops were impeded by them, and at last the two contending hosts could scarcely see one another! Both armies, therefore, desired peace.[1] The soldiers of Macrinus, who had never had much confidence in their leader, were demoralised by ill success, and showed themselves inclined to throw off the restraints of discipline. Those of Artabanus, a militia rather than a standing force, were unaccustomed to sustained efforts; and having been now for some months in the field, had grown weary, and wished to return home. Macrinus under these circumstances re-opened negotiations with his adversary. He was prepared to concede something more than he had proposed originally, and he had reason to believe that the Parthian monarch, having found the Roman resistance so stubborn, would be content to insist on less. The event justified his expectations. Artabanus relinquished his demand for the cession of Mesopotamia, and accepted a pecuniary compensation for his wrongs. Besides restoring the captives and the booty carried off by Caracallus in his raid, Macrinus had to pay a sum exceeding a million and a half of our money. Rome thus concluded her transactions with Parthia, after nearly three centuries of struggle, by ignominiously purchasing a peace.[2]

It might have been expected that the glory of this achievement would have brought the troubles of Artabanus to a close; and if they did not cause the pretender who still disputed his possession of the throne to submit, would at any rate have put an end to

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[1] See Dio Cass. lxxviii. 27.

[2] The ignominy was cloaked under the transparent fiction that the payment was by way of presents to the Parthian monarch and his lords (Dio Cass. l.s.c.).

any disaffection on the part of the subject nations that the previous ill-success of Parthia in her Roman wars might have provoked. But in the histories of nations and empires we constantly find that noble and gallant efforts to retrieve disaster and prevent the ruin consequent upon it come too late. When matters have gathered to a head, when steps that commit important persons have been taken, when classes or races have been encouraged to cherish hopes, when plans have been formed and advanced to a certain point, the course of action that has been contemplated and arranged for cannot suddenly be given up. The cause of discontent is removed, but the effects remain. Affections have been alienated, and the alienation still continues. A certain additional resentment is even felt at the tardy repentance, or revival, which seems to cheat the discontented of that general sympathy whereof without it they would have been secure. In default of their original grievance, it is easy for them to discover minor ones, to exaggerate these into importance, and to find in them a sufficient reason for persistence in the intended course. Hence revolutions often take place just when the necessity for them seems to be past, and kingdoms perish at a time when they have begun to show themselves deserving of a longer term of life.

It is impossible at the present day to form any trustworthy estimate of the real value of those grounds of complaint which the Persians, in common doubtless with other subject races, thought that they had against the Parthian rule. We can well understand that the supremacy of any dominant race is irksome to the aliens who have to submit to it; but such information as we possess fails to show us either anything seriously

oppressive in the general system of the Parthian government, or any special grievance whereof the Persians had to complain. The Parthians were tolerant; they did not interfere with the religious prejudices of their subjects, or attempt to enforce uniformity of creed or worship. Their military system did not press overheavily on the subject peoples, nor is there any reason to believe that the scale of their taxation was excessive. Such tyranny as is charged upon certain Parthian monarchs is not of a kind that would have been sensibly felt by the conquered nations, for it was exercised upon none who were not Parthians. If we endeavour to form a distinct notion of the grievances under which the Persians suffered, they seem to have amounted to no more than this: 1. That high offices, whether military or civil, were for the most part confined to those of Parthian blood, and not thrown open to Parthian subjects generally; 2. That the priests of the Persian religion were not held in any special honour,[1] but placed merely on a par with the religious ministers of the other subject races; 3. That no advantage in any respect was allowed to the Persians over the rest of the conquered peoples, notwithstanding that they had for so many years exercised supremacy over Western Asia, and given to the list of Asiatic worthies such names as those of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis. It must, however, be confessed that the account which has come down to us of the times in question is exceedingly meagre and incomplete; that we cannot say whether the Persians had not also other grounds of complaint besides those that are known to us; and, more especially, that we have no means of determining

[1] Agathias, ii. 26.

what the actual pressure of the grievances complained of was, or whether it did not reach to that degree of severity which moderns mostly hold to justify disaffection and rebellion. On the whole, perhaps, our conclusion must be, that the best justification of the outbreak is to be found in its success. The Parthians had no right to their position but such as arose out of the law of the stronger—

> The ancient rule, the good old plan,
> That those shall take who have the power,
> And those shall keep who can—

when the time came that they had lost this pre-eminence, superiority in strength having passed from them to a nation hitherto counted among their subjects, it was natural and right that the seat of authority should shift with the shift in the balance of power, and that the leadership of the Persians should be once more recognised.

If the motives which actuated the nation of the Persians in rising against their masters are thus obscure and difficult to be estimated, still less can we form any decided judgment upon those which caused their leader, Artaxerxes, to attempt his perilous enterprise. Could we trust implicitly the statement of Agathias, that Artaxerxes was himself a Magus, initiated in the deepest mysteries of the Order,[1] we should have grounds for considering that religious zeal was, at any rate, a leading motive of his conduct. It is certain that among the principal changes consequent upon his success was a religious revolution—the substitution for Parthian tolerance of all faiths and worships, of a rigidly enforced uniformity in religion, the establish-

[1] Agathias, ii. 25. Ἦν δέ γε αὐτὸς τῇ μαγικῇ κάτοχος ἱερουργίᾳ, καὶ αὐτουργὸς τῶν ἀπορρήτων.

ment of the Magi in power, and the bloody persecution of all such as declined obedience to the precepts of Zoroaster.[1] But the conjecture has been made, and cannot be refuted, that the proceedings of Artaxerxes in this matter should be ascribed to policy rather than to bigotry,[2] and in that case we could not regard him as originally inspired by a religious sentiment. Perhaps it is best to suppose that, like most founders of empires, he was mainly prompted by ambition; that he saw in the distracted state of Parthia and in the awakening of hope among the subject races, an occasion of which he determined to avail himself as far as he could, and that he was gradually led on to enlarge his views and to effect the great revolution, which he brought about, by the force of circumstances, the wishes of others, and the occurrence of opportunities which at first he neither foresaw nor desired.

It has been observed,[3] that Parthia was, during the whole reign of Artaxerxes, distracted by the claims of a pretender, Volagases V. According to Moses of Chorêné, two branches of the Arsacid family, both of them settled in Bactria, were at feud with the reigning prince; and these offended relatives carried their enmity to such a length as to consider submission to a foreigner a less evil than subjection to the *de facto* head of their house.[4] The success of Artabanus in the war against Rome had no effect upon his domestic foes; and Artaxerxes undoubtedly knew that, if he raised the standard of revolt, he might count on a certain amount of support from discontented Arsacids

[1] See Malcolm's *History of Persia*, vol. i. pp. 94, 95. Compare Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. pp. 322, 323, Smith's edition.

[2] Malcolm, p. 95.

[3] Supra, pp. 348–350.

[4] Mos. Choren. *Hist. Armen.* ii. 68.

and their followers. But his main reliance must have been on the Persians. The Persians had, in the original arrangements of the Parthian empire, been treated with a certain amount of favour. They had been allowed to retain their native monarchs,[1] a concession which naturally involved the continuance of the nation's laws, customs, and traditions. Their religion had not been persecuted, and had even in the early times attracted a considerable amount of Court favour.[2] But it would seem that latterly the privileges of the nation had been diminished, while their prejudices were wantonly shocked. The Magi had ceased to be regarded as of much account,[3] and, if they still formed nominally a portion of the king's council, can have had little influence on the conduct of affairs by the government. Such a custom as that of burning the dead, which seems to have been the rule in the later Parthian times,[4] could never have maintained its ground, if the opinion of the Magi, or their co-religionists, had been considered of much account.

Encouraged by the dissensions prevailing in the Parthian royal house, strong in the knowledge of his fellow-countrymen's discontent, and perhaps thinking that the losses which Artabanus had sustained in his three days' battle against the Romans under Macrinus had seriously weakened his military strength, Artaxerxes, tributary king of Persia under Parthia,[5]

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[1] Strab. xv. 3, § 24.

[2] See above, ch. vi. p. 86.

[3] Agathias, ii. 25.

[4] Herodian. iv. 30, p. 174.

[5] Herodian (vi. 6) says:—Ἀρταξέρξης ὁ Περσῶν βασιλεὺς, μετὰ τὸ Παρθυαίους καθελεῖν καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀνατολὴν ἀρχῆς παραλῦσαι, Ἀρτάβανον τὸν πρότερον καλούμενον τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα καὶ δυσὶ διαδήμασι χρώμενον ἀπέκτεινε. Dio, it is true, seems to have called him merely 'a certain Persian' (Ἀρταξέρξης τις Πέρσης); and later writers indulged in various tales as to his low birth. (Agathias, ii. 27; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 331; Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. pp. 89,

about A.D. 220,[1] or a little later, took up arms against his master, and in a little time succeeded in establishing the independence of Persia Proper, or the modern province of Fars.[2] Artabanus is said to have taken no steps at first to crush the rebellion, or to re-establish his authority over his revolted vassal.[3] Thus the Persian monarch, finding himself unmolested, was free to enlarge his plans, and having originally, as is probable, designed only the liberation of his own people, began to contemplate conquests. Turning his arms eastwards against Carmania (Kerman), he easily reduced that scantily-peopled tract under his dominion, after which he made war towards the north, and added to his kingdom some of the outlying regions of Media. Artabanus now at length resolved to bestir himself, and collecting his forces, took the field in person. Invading Persia Proper, he engaged in a desperate struggle with his rival. Three great battles were fought between the contending powers.[4] In the

90.) But these stories are probably myths, which clustered about the founder of the second Persian kingdom as so many similar ones did about the founder of the first, Cyrus. (Herod. i. 107-128.) On the abundance of such myths in connection with the person of Artaxerxes, see Moses of Chorene (*Hist. Arm.* ii. 67), who speaks of 'the dream of desire, and the judgment, and the fire that sprang from Sassan, the imprisoned flock and the white eye, the predictions of the soothsayers, and all that follows them—Artaxerxes' incest and his murders, the wild eloquence of the Magian damsel owing to the calf, &c.: the she-goat, which, protected by the Eagle, suckled the boy; the information of the Crow, and the Lion's remiss defence, the service rendered by the Wolf, and the strange trial of strength, and all the other silly fables which are related in the books, but which I do not intend to repeat.'

[1] The exact date of the rebellion of Artaxerxes is unknown. Roman writers only tell us that he conquered Artabanus and began to threaten Rome in A.D. 226. The coins confirm this, but add nothing. Abulpharagius, the Arabian writer, says that Artaxerxes founded the New Persian kingdom in the third year of Alexander Severus, or A.D. 224 (p. 80).

[2] Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 91.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Dio Cass. lxxx. 3.

last, which took place in the plain of Hormuz,[1] between Bebahan and Shuster, on the course of the Jerahi river, Artabanus was, after a desperate conflict, completely defeated,[2] and not only defeated but slain (A.D. 226).

The victory of Hormuz did not, however, absolutely decide the contest, or determine at once that the Parthian empire should fall, and the new Persian kingdom succeed into its place. Artabanus had left sons;[3] and there were not wanting those among the feudatories of the empire, and even among the neighbouring potentates, who were well inclined to embrace their cause. A certain Artavasdes seems to have claimed the throne, and to have been accepted as king, at least by a portion of the Parthians, in the year following the death of Artabanus (A.D. 227), when he certainly issued coins.[4] The Armenian monarch, who had been set on his throne by Artabanus, and was uncle to the young princes,[5] was especially anxious to maintain the Arsacids in power; he gave them a refuge in Armenia,[6] collected an army on their behalf, and engaging Artaxerxes, is even said to have defeated him in a battle.[7] But his efforts, and those of Artavasdes, were unavailing. The arms of Artaxerxes in the end everywhere prevailed.

[1] So Malcolm, following Persian authorities. (*History of Persia*, l.s.c.)

[2] Dio Cass. l.s.c.; Herodian. vi. 6, 7; Agathias, ii. 25, &c.

[3] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[4] A coin of Artavasdes has been figured and described by Mr. Taylor in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1871, p. 226, and pl. ii. No. 7. The same coin is figured also, but very poorly, in Lindsay (*History and Coinage*, pl. iv. No. 95), and is there assigned wrongly to Volagases V. The legend upon it can be read as ארתבזו (Artabazu) or Artavasdes. Some coins of this king bear the date ΘΛΦ, or A.D. 227.

[5] Procopius *de Ædific. Justinian.* iii. 1. The native historians give this prince the name of Chosroes, but do not acknowledge his close relationship to Artabanus. (See Mos. Chor. *Hist. Arm.* ii. 64–70.)

[6] Dio Cass. l.s.c. On the efforts which were made by the Armenian king to help Artabanus, see Mos. Chor. *H.A.* ii. 68, 70.

[7] Dio Cass. ut supra. Compare Herodian. vi. 15.

After a struggle, which cannot have lasted more than a few years, the provinces of the old Parthian empire submitted; the last Arsacid prince fell into the hands of the Persian king;[1] and the founder of the new dynasty sought to give legitimacy to his rule by taking to wife an Arsacid princess.[2]

Thus perished the great Parthian monarchy after an existence of nearly five centuries. Its end must be attributed in the main to internal decay, working itself out especially in two directions. The Arsacid race, with which the idea of the empire was bound up,[3] instead of clinging together with that close 'union' which is 'strength,' allowed itself to be torn to pieces by dissensions, to waste its force in quarrels, and to be made a handle of by every foreign invader, or domestic rebel, who chose to use its name in order to cloak his own selfish projects. The race itself does not seem to have become exhausted. Its chiefs, the successive occupants of the throne, never sank into mere weaklings or *fainéants*, never shut themselves up in their seraglios, or ceased to take a leading part, alike in civil broils, and in struggles with foreign rivals. But the hold which the race had on the population, native and foreign, was gradually weakened by the feuds which raged within it, by the profusion with which the sacred blood was shed by those in whose veins it ran, and the difficulty of knowing which living member of it was its true head, and so entitled to the allegiance of those who wished to be faithful Parthian subjects. Further, the vigour of the Parthian soldiery must have gradually declined, and their superiority over the mass

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[1] Mos. Chor. *H.A.* ii. 70.
[2] Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 96, note.
[3] See above, p. 229.

of the nations under their dominion have diminished. We found reasons for believing that, as early as A.D. 58, Hyrcania succeeded in throwing off the Parthian yoke,[1] and thus setting an example of successful rebellion to the subject peoples. The example may have been followed in cases of which we hear nothing; for the condition of the more remote portions of the empire was for the most part unknown to the Romans. When Persia, about A.D. 220, revolted from Artabanus, it was no doubt with a conviction that the Parthians were no longer the terrible warriors who under Mithridates I. had driven all the armies of the East before them like chaff, or who under Orodes and Phraates IV. had gained signal victories over the Romans. It is true that Artabanus had contended not unsuccessfully with Macrinus. But the prestige of Parthia was far from being re-established by the result of his three days' battle. Rome retained as her own, notwithstanding his success, the old Parthian province of Mesopotamia, and was thus, even in the moment of her weakness, acknowledged by Parthia to be the stronger. The Persians are not likely to have been braver or more warlike at the time of their revolt from Artabanus than in the days when they were subjected by Mithridates. Any alteration, therefore, in the relative strength of the two peoples must be ascribed to Parthian decline, since it cannot have been owing to Persian advance and improvement. To conclude, we may perhaps allow something to the personal qualities of Artaxerxes, who appears to have possessed all the merits of the typical Oriental conqueror. Artabanus

[1] See above, p. 286.

was among the most able of the later Parthian monarchs; but his antagonist was more than this, possessing true military genius. It is quite possible that, if the leaders on the two sides had changed places, the victory might have rested, not with the Persians, but with the Parthians.

CHAPTER XXII.

On the Architecture and Ornamental Art of the Parthians.

THE modern historian of Architecture observes,[1] when he reaches the period with which we have had to deal in this volume, that, with the advent of Alexander Oriental architecture disappears, and that its history is an absolute blank from the downfall of the Achæmenians in B.C. 331 to the rise of the Sassanians, about A.D. 226. The statement made involves a certain amount of exaggeration; but still it expresses, roughly and strongly, a curious and important fact. The Parthians were not, in any full or pregnant sense of the word, builders. They did not aim at leaving a material mark upon the world by means of edifices or other great works. They lacked the spirit which had impelled successively the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians to cover Western Asia with architectural monuments, proofs at once of the wealth, and the grand ideas, of those who raised them. Parthia, compared to these pretentious empires, was retiring and modest. The monarchs, however rich they may have been, affected something of primitive rudeness and simplicity in their habits and style of life, their dwellings and temples, their palaces and tombs. It is difficult indeed to draw the line in every case between pure Parthian work and Sassanian; but on the whole

[1] Fergusson, *History of Architecture*, vol. ii. p. 422.

there is, no doubt, reason to believe that the architectural remains in Mesopotamia and Persia which belong to the period between Alexander and the Arab conquest, are mainly the work of the Sassanian or New Persian kingdom, and that comparatively few of them can be ascribed with confidence to a time anterior to A.D. 227. Still a certain number, which have about them indications of greater antiquity than the rest, or which belong to sites famous in Parthian rather than in Persian times, may reasonably be regarded as in all probability structures of the Arsacid period; and from these we may gather at least the leading characteristics of the Parthian architecture, its aims and resources, its style and general effect, while from other remains—scanty indeed, and often mutilated—we may obtain a tolerable notion of their sculpture and other ornamental art.

The most imposing remains which seem certainly assignable to the Parthian period are those of Hatra, or El-Hadhr, visited by Mr. Layard in 1846, and described at length by Mr. Ross in the ninth volume of the 'Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,'[1] as well as by Mr. Fergusson, in his 'History of Architecture.'[2] Hatra became known as a place of importance in the early part of the second century after Christ.[3] It successfully resisted Trajan in A.D. 116, and Severus in A.D. 198.[4] It is then described as a large and populous city, defended by strong and extensive walls,[5] and con-

[1] See Art. xxii. pp. 467–470.

[2] Vol. ii. pp. 423–425.

[3] See Arrian, Fr. 15: Ἄτραι, πόλις μεταξὺ Εὐφράτου καὶ Τίγρητος. Compare Dio Cass. lxviii. 31; lxxv. 10; Herodian. iii. 1 and 28; Arrian, Fr. 6.

[4] Amm. Marc. xxv. 8. 'Hatram . . . . oppidum, quod diruendum adorti temporibus variis Trajanus et Severus, principes bellicosi, cum exercitibus pæne deleti sunt.' See above, pp. 315 and 345.

[5] Herodian. iii. 28.

taining within it a temple of the Sun, celebrated for the great value of its offerings.[1] It enjoyed its own kings at this time,[2] who were regarded as of Arabian stock, and were among the more important of the Parthian tributary monarchs. By the year A.D. 363 Hatra had gone to ruin, and is then described as 'long since deserted.'[3] Its flourishing period thus belongs to the space between A.D. 100 and A.D. 300; and its remains, to which Mr. Fergusson assigns the date A.D. 250, must be regarded as probably at least a century earlier, and consequently as indicating the character of the architecture which prevailed under the later Parthians, and which, if Sassanian improvements had not obliterated them, we should have found upon the site of Ctesiphon.

The city of Hatra[4] was enclosed by a circular wall of great thickness,[5] built of large square-cut stones, and strengthened at intervals of about 170 yards by square towers or bastions. Its circumference considerably exceeded three miles. Outside the wall was a broad and very deep ditch, and on the further side of the ditch was an earthen rampart of considerable height and thickness. Two detached forts, situated on eminences, commanded the approaches to the place, one towards the east, and the other towards the north. The wall was pierced by four gateways, of which the principal one faced the east.[6]

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[1] Dio Cass. lxxv. 12.

[2] Herodian. iii. 1 and 27.

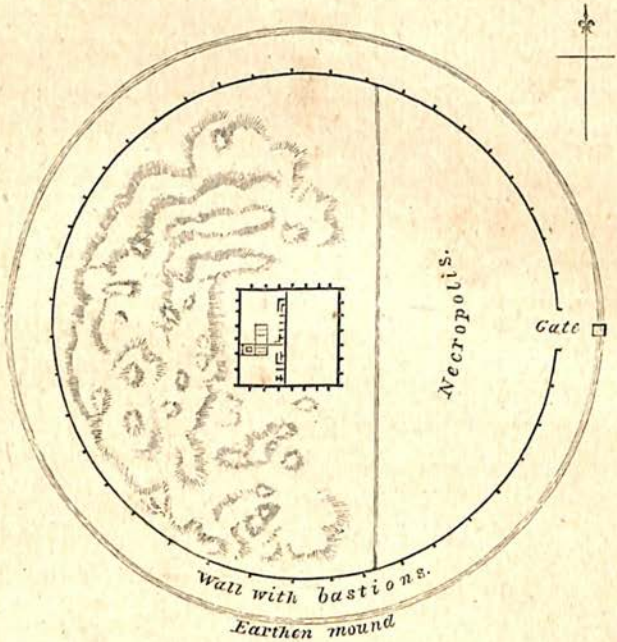
[3] Amm. Marc. l.s.c. 'Hatram. . . . vetus oppidum in media solitudine positum, *olimque desertum*.'

[4] In this description I follow especially the account given by Mr. Ross. (*Geograph. Journal*, l.s.c.) On some points I am further indebted to Mr. Ainsworth (*Geographical Journal*, vol. xi. pp. 13 *et seq.*; *Researches in Mesopotamia*, vol. ii. pp. 165 *et seqq.*), and on others to Mr. Fergusson (*Hist. of Architectura*, vol. ii. pp. 423-425).

[5] The width was a little more than ten feet.

[6] Mr. Ross's plan shows one

The circular space within the walls was divided into two portions by a water-course[1] passing across it from



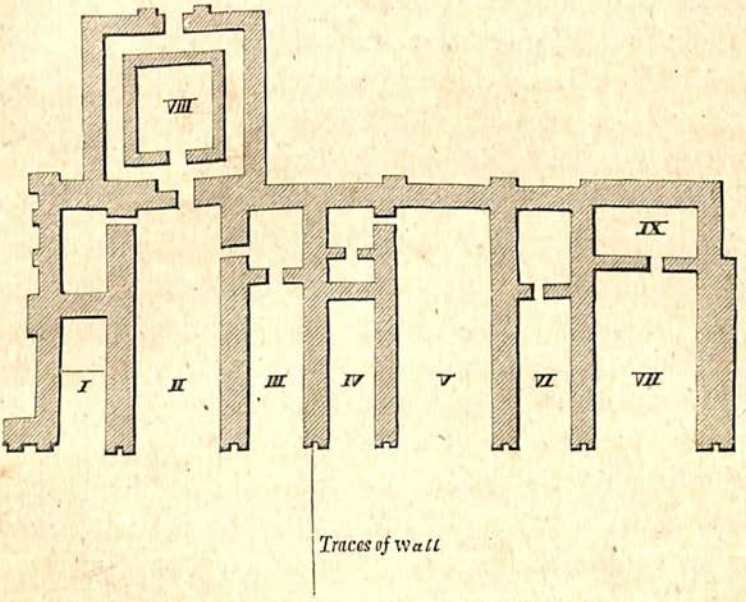
Plan of Hatra (after Ross).

north to south, and running somewhat east of the centre, which thus divided the circle into two unequal parts. The eastern portion was left comparatively clear of buildings, and seems to have been used mainly as a burial-ground; in the western were the public edifices and the more important houses of the inhabitants. Of the former by far the most remarkable was one which stood nearly in the centre of the city, and which has been called by some a palace, by others a temple, but which may best be regarded as combining both

gateway only—viz. the eastern one. Mr. Ainsworth, however, states that there were four. The plan which the latter traveller sent with his memoir to the Royal Geographical Society was, unfortunately, not published.

[1] Mr. Ross represents the water-course as straight, but Mr. Ainsworth says it is tortuous. (*Researches*, vol. ii. p. 167.)

uses.[1] This building stood within a walled enclosure of an oblong square shape, about 800 feet long by 700 broad.[2] The wall surrounding it was strengthened with bastions, like the wall around the city. The enclosure comprised two courts, an inner and an



Plan of Palace-Temple at Hatra (after Fergusson and Ross).

outer. The outer court, which lay towards the east, and was first entered, was entirely clear of buildings, while the inner court contained two considerable edifices. Of these the less important was one which

[1] In the East the Temple was commonly, or at any rate frequently, an adjunct of the palace. Two temples formed part of the old Assyrian palace at Calah or Nimrud. (See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 319-320, 2nd edition.) A temple was included within Sargon's palace at Khorsabad (ibid. p. 296). Mr. Fergusson regards the grand buildings at Persepolis as 'Palace-Temples.'

[2] These measurements were furnished to Mr. Fergusson by Mr. Layard. (*Hist. of Architecture*, vol. ii. pp. 423–4.) Mr. Ross regarded the enclosure as 'a square of 300 good *paces*' (query, yards?) See the *Geograph. Journal*, vol. ix p. 468.

stretched from north to south across the entire inclosure, and abutted upon the outer court; this was confused in plan, and consisted chiefly of a number of small apartments, which have been regarded as guard-rooms.[1] The other was a building of greater pretensions. It was composed mainly of seven vaulted halls, all of them parallel one to another, and all facing eastward, three being of superior and four of inferior size. The smaller halls (Nos. I., III., IV., and VI., on the plan) were about thirty feet long by twenty wide, and had a height of thirty feet;[2] the larger ones measured ninety feet in length,[3] and were from thirty-five to forty feet broad,[4] with a height of sixty feet.[5] All were upon the same plan. They had semicircular vaulted roofs, no windows, and received their light from the archway at the east end, which was either left entirely open, or perhaps closed with curtains.

Externally, the eastern façade of the building, which was evidently its main front, had for ornament, besides the row of seven arches, a series of pillars, or rather pilasters, from which the arches sprang, some sculptures on the stones composing the arches, and one or two emblematic figures in the spaces left between the pilasters. The sculptures on the stones of the arches consisted either of human heads, or of representations of a female form, apparently floating in air.[6] An emblematic

[1] Ainsworth, *Researches*, &c., vol. ii. p. 166. At the southern extremity of the row of small chambers was a hall of some size.

[2] So Mr. Ross. (*Geograph. Journal*, l.s.c.) But from the drawing it would seem that the estimate is insufficient.

[3] Mr. Ross says '32 long *paces*,' by which he seems to mean 'steps.' Mr. Ainsworth says '31 yards.'

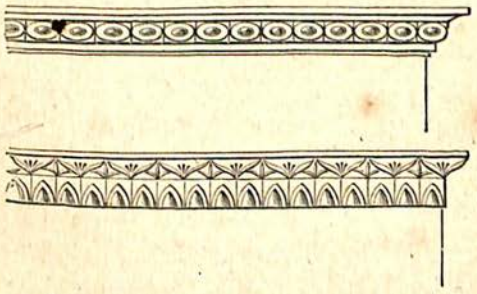
[4] 'Twelve long paces' (Ross). 'Fourteen yards' (Ainsworth).

[5] Mr. Ross and Mr. Ainsworth agree in this estimate.

[6] The 'female form floating in

sculpture between the fourth and fifth arch represented a griffin with twisted tail, raised about 5 feet above the ground. The entire length of the façade was about 300 feet.

The interior of the smaller halls had no ornament; but the larger ones were decorated somewhat elaborately. Here the side walls were broken by three squared pilasters, rising to the commencement of the vaulting, and terminated by a quasi-capital of ornamental work, consisting of a series of ovals, each oval containing in its centre a round ball of dark stone. Underneath these quasi-capitals, at the distance of from two to three feet, ran a cornice, which crossed the pilasters, and extended the whole length of the apartment, consisting of flowers and half-ovals, each oval containing a half-ball of the same dark stone



Cornice and quasi-capital, Hatra (after Ross).

as the capitals. Finally, on the pilasters, immediately below the cornice, were sculptured commonly either two or three human heads,[1] the length of each head

air' was confined to the hall marked No. II. on the plan. The stones of the other arches bore heads both male and female, some with 'very curious curling bag-wigs.' (Compare the bushy wigs on many of the Parthian coins.)

[1] In the Hall marked No. II. on the plan, the heads were uniformly three, as in the above woodcut. In Hall No. V. each pillar bore two heads. Hall No. VII. seems to have had no pillars. The north side is in ruins; the south is ornamented with a row of eight human-headed bulls, standing out from the wall as far as their shoulders at a distance from the ground of about ten feet. (Ross in *Geographical Journal*, vol. ix. p. 469.)

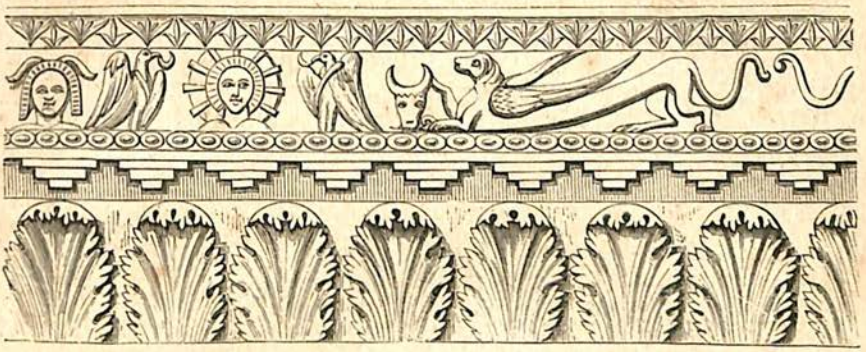
being about two feet, and the faces representing diverse types of humanity, some old and some young, some male and some female, some apparently realistic, some idealised and more or less grotesque in their accompaniments. The drawing of the heads is said to have been full of spirit, and their general effect is pronounced life-like and striking.

The seven halls, which have been described, were divided into two groups, of three and four respectively, by a low fence, which ran from east to west across the inner court, from the partition wall separating the third and fourth halls to the buildings which divided the inner court from the outer. It is probable that this division separated the male and female apartments. The female ornamentation [1] of the large hall (No. II.) belonging to the southern group is perhaps an indication of the sex of its inmates; and another sign that these were the female quarters is to be found in the direct communication existing between this portion of the building and 'the Temple' (No. VIII.), which could not be reached from the male apartments except by a long circuit round the building.

The 'Temple' itself was an apartment of a square shape, each side being about forty feet. It was completely surrounded by a vaulted passage, into which light came from two windows at its south-west and north-west corners. The Temple was entered by a single doorway, the position of which was directly opposite an opening leading into the passage from Hall No. II. Above this doorway was a magnificent frieze, the character of which is thought to indicate the religious purpose of the structure. The interior of the

[1] See above, p. 376, note [6].

Temple was without ornamentation, vaulted, and except for the feeble light which entered by the single



Frieze over Temple doorway, Hatra (after Ross).

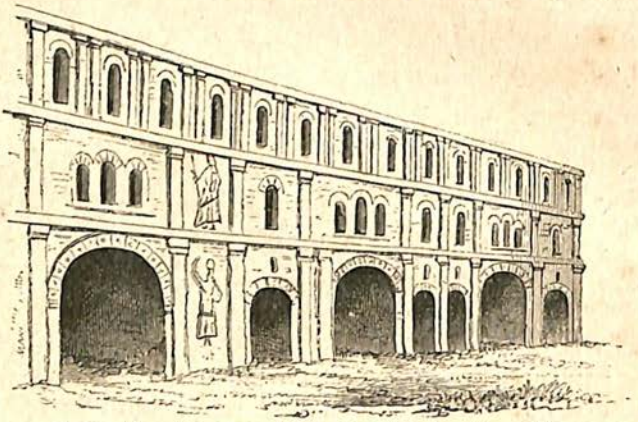
doorway, dark. On the west side a portal led into the passage from the outer air.

Besides these main apartments, the edifice which we are describing contained a certain number of small rooms, lying behind the halls, and entered by doorways opening from them. One or two such rooms are found behind each of the smaller halls; and another of somewhat larger dimensions lay behind the great hall (numbered VII. in the plan), forming the extreme north-western corner of the building. These rooms were vaulted and had no windows, receiving their only light from the small doorways by which they were entered.

It is believed that the entire edifice, or at any rate the greater portion of it, had an upper story. Traces of such a structure appear over the halls numbered I. and VI.; and it is thought that the story extended over the entire range of halls. One traveller,[1] on con-

[1] Ainsworth, *Researches*, vol. ii. p. 165. Mr. Ross believed that he found traces of a staircase leading to the upper rooms at the southern end of the building. (*Geograph. Journal*, vol. ix. p. 470.)

jectural grounds, even assigns to the building an elevation of three stories, and ventures to restore the second and third in the mode represented in the subjoined woodcut. According to this author the upper portion of the edifice resembled in many respects the great palace of the Sassanian monarchs, of which splendid



Restoration of the Hatra Palace-Temple (after Ainsworth).

remains still exist on the site of Ctesiphon, where they are known as the Takht-i-Khuzroo, or Palace of Chosroes. That palace was, however, on a very different plan from the Hatra one, comprising as it did one hall only, but of a size vastly superior to any of those at Hatra, and two wings, one on either side of the hall, made up of dwelling and sleeping apartments.[1]

The few windows which exist at Hatra are oblong square in shape,[2] as in general are the doorways connecting one apartment with another. In one case there is an arched doorway, or niche, which has been blocked up. There are no passages except the one which surrounds 'the Temple,' the apartments generally leading directly one into another. In some cases

[1] See the ground plan in Mr. Fergusson's *History of Architecture*, vol. ii. p. 430.

[2] Ross in *Geograph. Journal*, vol. ix. p. 468.

the lintel of a doorway is formed of a single stone, and ornamented with very delicate carving.[1] The doorways are for the most part towards the corners of apartments; that of the Temple, however, is in the centre of its eastern wall.

The general style of the buildings at Hatra has been said to be 'Roman or Byzantine;' and it has even been supposed that 'in the style of the ornaments and sculptured figures may be traced the corrupt taste and feeble outline of the artists of Constantinople.'[2] But there is abundant reason to believe that the Hatra Palace was built nearly two centuries before Constantinople came into existence; and, although the large use of the round arch in vaulting may be due to the spread of Roman architectural ideas, yet there are no grounds for supposing that any but native artists, Parthian subjects, were employed in the work, or that it is other than a fair specimen of what was achieved by the Parthian builders during the later period of the empire. The palace of Volagases III. at Ctesiphon, which Avidius Cassius destroyed in his invasion,[3] was most likely of the same general character—a combination of lofty halls suitable for ceremonies and audiences with small and dark sleeping or living rooms, opening out of them, the whole placed in the middle of a paved court, and the male apartments carefully divided from those of the women.

The remains at Hatra are further remarkable for a considerable number of reservoirs and tombs. The open space between the town proper and the eastern wall and gate is dotted with edifices of a square shape, standing apart from one another, which are reasonably

[1] See above, p. 379.
[2] Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 571.
[3] Supra, page 328.

regarded as sepulchres.[1] These are built in a solid way, of hewn stone, and consist either of one or two chambers. They vary in size from twenty feet square to forty, and are generally of about the same height. Some are perfectly plain, but the exteriors of others are ornamented with pilasters. The reservoirs occur in the paved court which surrounds the main building; they have narrow apertures, but expand below the aperture into the shape of a bell, and are carefully constructed of well-cut stones closely fitted together.

The material used at Hatra is uniformly a brownish grey limestone; and the cutting is so clean and smooth that it is doubted whether the stones have needed any cement. If cement has been employed, at any rate it cannot now be seen, the stones everywhere appearing to touch one another.

There are several buildings remaining in Persia, the date of which cannot be much later than that of the Hatra edifice;[2] but, as it is on the whole more probable that they belong to the Sassanian than to the Parthian period, no account of them will be given here. It will be sufficient to observe that their architecture grows naturally out of that which was in use at Hatra, and that thus we are entitled to ascribe to Parthian times and to subjects of the Parthian Empire that impulse to Oriental architecture which awoke it to renewed life after a sleep of ages, and which in a short time produced such imposing results as the Takht-i-

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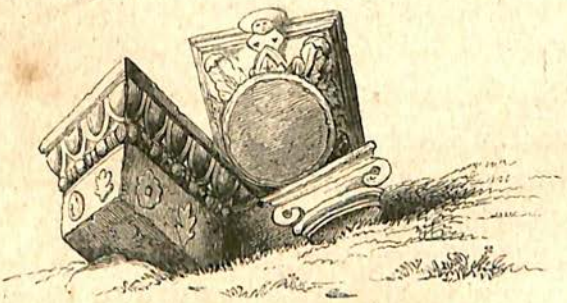
[1] Ross in *Geograph. Journal*, vol. ix. p. 370. Mr. Ainsworth regards some of these buildings as dwelling houses, and thinks that only upon a very cursory inspection could they have been considered in all cases tombs (*Researches*, vol. ii. p. 171). He does not, however, question the sepulchral character of the greater number.

[2] As especially those at Serbistan and Firuzabad, described by Mr. Fergusson in his *History of Architecture*, vol. ii. pp. 428–430.

Khuzroo at Ctesiphon, the ruins of Shapur, and the triumphal arch at Takht-i-Bostan.

The decorative and fictile art of the Parthians has received no inconsiderable amount of illustration from remains discovered, in the years 1850–1852, in Babylonia. In combination with a series of Parthian coins were found by Mr. Loftus, on the site of the ancient Erech (now Warka), a number of objects in clay, plaster, and metal,[1] enabling us to form a fair idea of the mode in which purely Parthian edifices were decorated during the best times of the empire, and of the style that then prevailed in respect of personal ornaments, domestic utensils, and other objects capable, more or less, of æsthetic handling. The remains discovered comprised numerous architectural fragments in plaster and brick; a large number of ornamental coffins; several statuettes in terra-cotta; jars, jugs, vases, and lamps in earthenware; some small glass bottles; and various personal decorations, such as beads, rings, and ear-rings.

The architectural fragments consisted of capitals of

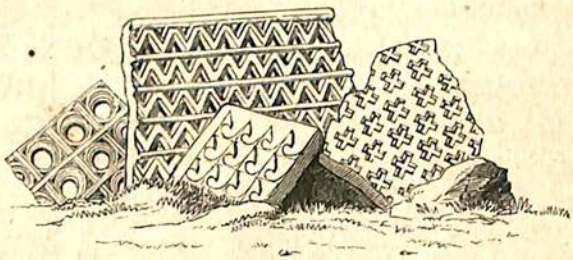


Parthian Capitals (after Loftus).

pillars, portions of cornices, and specimens of a sort of diapering which seems to have been applied to screens or thin partitions. The capitals were somewhat heavy

[1] See Loftus, *Chaldæa and Susiana*, pp. 202-214.

in design, and at first sight struck the spectator as barbarous; but they exhibited a good deal of ingenious boldness, an absence of conventionality, and an occasional quaintness of design not unworthy of a Gothic decorator. One especially, which combines the upper portion of a human figure, wearing the puffed-out hair or wig, which the Parthians affected, with an elegant leaf rising from the neck of the capital, and curving gracefully under the abacus, has decided merit, and is 'suggestive of the later Byzantine style.'[1] The cornices occasionally reminded the discoverer of the remarkable frieze at El-Hadhr,[2] and were characterised by the same freedom and boldness of invention as the capitals. But the most curious remains were the fragments of a sort of screen work, pieces of plaster covered



Parthian Diapering (after Loftus).

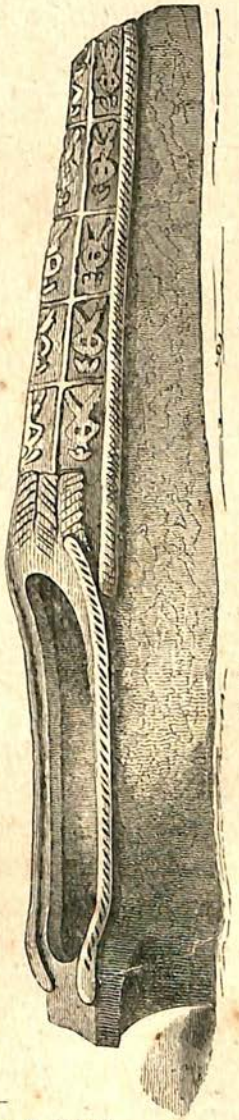
with geometric designs upon both sides, the patterns on the two sides differing. These designs, though unlike in many respects the arabesques of the Mohammedans, yet seemed on the whole to be their precursors, the 'geometric curves and tracery' appearing to 'shadow forth the beauty and richness of a style which afterwards followed the tide of Mohammedan conquest to the remotest corners of the known world.'[3]

[1] Loftus, *Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 226.

[2] Ibid. p. 225. (See the woodcut, *supra*, p. 379).

[3] Ibid. p. 227. Mr. Loftus argues that the peculiarities of Saracenic architecture, its richly wrought

The ornamental coffins were of a coarse glazed earthenware, bluish-green in hue, and belonged to the kind which has been called 'slipper-shaped.'[1] They varied in length from three feet to six, and had a large aperture at their upper end, by means of which the body was placed in them, and a flat lid to close this aperture, ornamented like the coffin, and fixed in its place by a fine lime cement. A second aperture at the lower extremity of the coffin allowed for the escape of the gases disengaged during decomposition. The ornamentation of the coffins varied, but consisted



Parthian ornamented coffin (after Loftus).

Figure on coffin (after Loftus).

tracing and geometric ornamentation, originated with the Parthians, were disused by the Sassanians, and after the Mohammedan conquest were revived by the Arabs. (*Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 228.)

[1] On these coffins, see Loftus, pp. 203-206; Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 558; Rawlinson, *Herodotus*, vol. i. p. 272, 2nd edition.

generally of small figures of men, about six or seven inches in length, the most usual figure being a warrior with his arms akimbo and his legs astride, wearing on his head a *coiffure*, like that which is seen on the Parthian coins, and having a sword hanging from the belt.

Of the statuettes in terra-cotta, one of the most curious represented a Parthian warrior, recumbent, and

Parthian statuette (after Loftus).

apparently about to drink out of a cup held in the left hand.[1] The figure was clad in a long coat of mail, with greaves on the legs and a helmet upon the head. Others represented females; these had lofty head-dresses, which sometimes rose into two peaks or horns, recalling the costume of English ladies in the time of Henry IV. These figures were veiled and carefully draped about the upper part of the person, but showed the face, and had the legs bare from the knee downwards.[2]

The jars, jugs, vases, and lamps greatly resembled those of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, but were on the whole more elegant and artistic. The forms appended will give a tolerable idea of the general character of these vessels. They were of various sizes,

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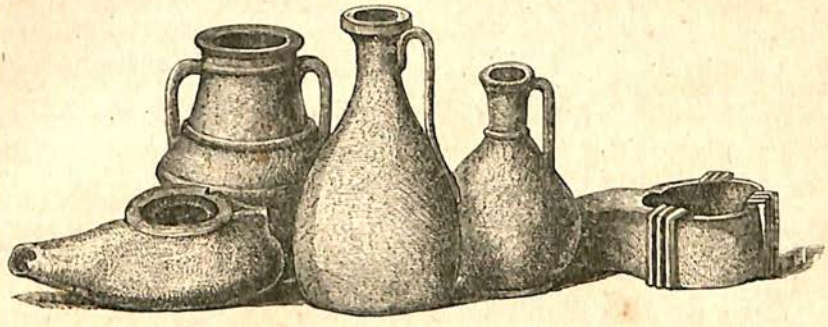
[1] Loftus, p. 213.

[2] Ibid. p. 214.

and appear to have been placed in the tombs, partly as the offerings of friends and well-wishers, partly with



Parthian vases, jugs, and lamps (after Loftus).

the more superstitious object of actually supplying the deceased with the drink and light needful for him on his passage from earth to the realms of the dead.[1]

The glass bottles were, perhaps, lachrymatories.[2] They had no peculiar characteristics, but were almost exactly similar to objects of the same kind belonging to the times of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires.[3] They exhibited the same lovely prismatic colours, which have been so admired in the glass of those kingdoms, an effect of decomposition, which, elsewhere generally disfiguring, in the case of this material enhances the original beauty of the object tenfold by clothing it in hues of the utmost brilliance and delicacy.[4]

The personal decorations consisted chiefly of armlets,

[1] Similar ideas existed among the early Babylonians (*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. pp. 86–89, 2nd edition) and had probably been passed on to the mixed race which inhabited the same tract of country under the Parthians.

[2] As Mr. Loftus supposed (*Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 211).

[3] See *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i. p. 389; vol. ii. p. 570, 2nd edit.

[4] Compare the note of Sir D. Brewster at the end of Mr. Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 674–676

bangles, beads, rings, and ear-rings.[1] They were in gold, silver, copper, and brass. Some of the smaller gold ornaments, such as ear-rings, and small plates or beads for necklaces and fillets, were 'of a tasteful and elegant design.'[2] The finger-rings were coarser, while the toe-rings, armlets, and bangles, were for the most part exceedingly rude and barbarous. Head-dresses in gold, tall and pointed, are said to have been found occasionally; but the museums of Europe have not yet been able to secure any, as they are usually melted down by the finders. Broad ribbons of gold, which may have depended like strings from a cap, are commoner, and were seen by Mr. Loftus. Altogether, the ornaments indicated a strong love of personal display, and the possession of considerable wealth, but no general diffusion of a correct taste, nor any very advanced skill in design or metallurgy.

Of purely æsthetic art—art, that is, into which the idea of the useful does not enter at all—the Parthians appear scarcely to have had an idea. During the five centuries of their sway, they seem to have set up no more than some half-dozen bas-reliefs. There is, indeed, only one such work which can be positively identified as belonging to the Parthian period by the inscription which accompanies it.[3] The other presumedly Parthian reliefs are adjudged to the people by art critics merely from their style and their locality, occurring as they do within the limits of the Parthian kingdom, and lacking the characteristics which attach to the art of those who preceded and of those who followed the Parthians in these countries.

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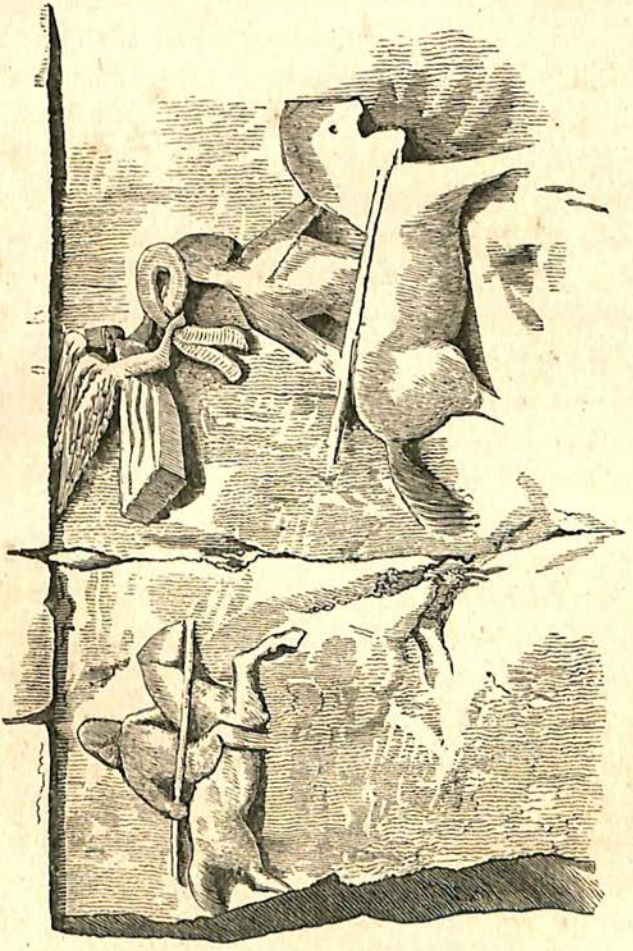
[1] Loftus, *Chaldæa and Susiana*, p. 211.

[2] Ibid.

[3] On this inscription, see above, ch. xv., p. 260.

The one certainly Parthian bas-relief is that which still exists on the great rock of Behistun, at the foot of



Bas-relief of Gotarzes (after Flandin and Coste).

the mountain, raised but slightly above the plain.[1] It seems to have contained a series of tall figures, looking

[1] This monument was seen by Sir H. Rawlinson in 1838, and described in the *Journal of the Geographical Society*, vol. ix. p. 115. It was carefully copied by M. Coste and inserted in the great work of M. Flandin (*Voyage en Perse*, PlanchesAnciennes, No. 119). The accompanying woodcut is taken from this engraving.

towards the right, and apparently engaged in a march or procession, while above and between them were smaller figures on horseback, armed with lances, and galloping in the same direction. One of these was attended by a figure of Fame or Victory, flying in the air, and about to place a diadem around his brow. The present condition of the sculpture is extremely bad. Atmospheric influences have worn away the larger figures to such an extent that they are discerned with difficulty; and a recent Governor of Kirmanshah has barbarously inserted into the middle of the relief an arched niche, in which he has placed a worthless Arabic inscription. It is with difficulty that we form any judgment of the original artistic merit of a work which presents itself to us in such a worn and mutilated form; but, on the whole, we are perhaps justified in pronouncing that it must at its best have been one of inferior quality, even when compared only with the similar productions of Asiatics. The general character is rather that of the Sassanian than of the Assyrian or Persian period. The human figures have a heavy clumsiness about them that is unpleasant to contemplate; the horses are rudely outlined, and are too small for the men; the figure of Fame is out of all proportion to the hero whom she crowns, and the diadem which she places on his head is ridiculous, being nearly as large as herself! On the other hand, there is spirit in the attitudes of both men and horses; the Fame floats well in air; and the relief is free from that coarse grotesqueness which offends us in the productions of the Sassanian artists.

Another bas-relief, probably, but not quite certainly Parthian, exists in the gorge of Sir-pul-i-zohab, and has been recently published in the great work of

Parthian bas-relief (after Flandin and Coste).

M. Flandin.[1] The inscription on this monument, though it has not yet been deciphered,[2] appears to be written in the alphabet found upon the Parthian coins. The monument seems to represent a Parthian king, mounted on horseback, and receiving a chaplet at the hand of a subject. The king wears a cap bound round with the diadem, the long ends of which depend over his shoulder. He is clothed in a close-fitting tunic and loose trowsers, which hang down upon his boots, and wears also a short cloak fastened under his chin, and reaching nearly to the knee. The horse which he bestrides is small, but strongly made; the tail is long, and the mane seems to be plaited. Thus far the representation, though somewhat heavy and clumsy, is not ill-drawn; but the remaining figure—that of the Parthian subject—is wholly without merit. The back of the man is turned, but the legs are in profile; one arm is ridiculously short, and the head is placed too near the left shoulder. It would seem that the artist, while he took pains with the representation of the monarch, did not care how ill he rendered the subordinate figure, which he left in the unsatisfactory condition that may be seen in the preceding woodcut.

A set of reliefs,[3] discovered by the Baron de Bode in the year 1841, are also thought by the best judges

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[1] Flandin, *Voyage en Perse*, tom. iv. pl. 208.

[2] If the inscription were copied by a person versed in the character, it is probable that there would be little difficulty in deciphering it. But the differences between several of the Parthian letters are so slight that it is extremely hard for a person unskilled in the character to make a correct transcript. Still the word 'satrap' seems to be traceable at the commencement of the left-hand inscription.

[3] These reliefs were communicated by the Baron to M. Flandin, and will be found represented in the *Voyage en Perse*, tom. iv. plates 224 and 226. They exist on an isolated mass of black rock, near Tengh-i-Saoulek in the Bakhtyari mountains (*Voyage*, tom. i. pp. 184, 185).

to be Parthian. The most important of them represents a personage of consequence, apparently a Magus, who seems to be in the act of consecrating a sacred

Parthian bas-relief of a Magus (after Flandin and Coste).

cippus, round which have been placed wreaths or chaplets. Fifteen spectators are present, arranged in two rows, one above the other, all except the first of

them standing. The first sits upon a rude chair or stool. The figures generally are in an advanced stage of decay; but that of the Magus is tolerably well preserved, and probably indicates with sufficient accuracy the costume and appearance of the great hierarchs under the Parthians. The conical cap described by Strabo[1] is very conspicuous. Below this the hair is worn in the puffed-out fashion of the later Parthian period. The upper lip is ornamented by moustaches, and the chin covered by a straight beard. The figure is dressed in a long sleeved tunic, over which is worn a cloak, fastened at the neck by a round brooch, and descending a little below the knees. The legs are encased in a longer and a shorter pair of trowsers, the former plain, the latter striped perpendicularly. Round the neck is worn a collar or necklace; and on the right arm are three armlets and three bracelets. The conical cap appears to be striped or fluted.

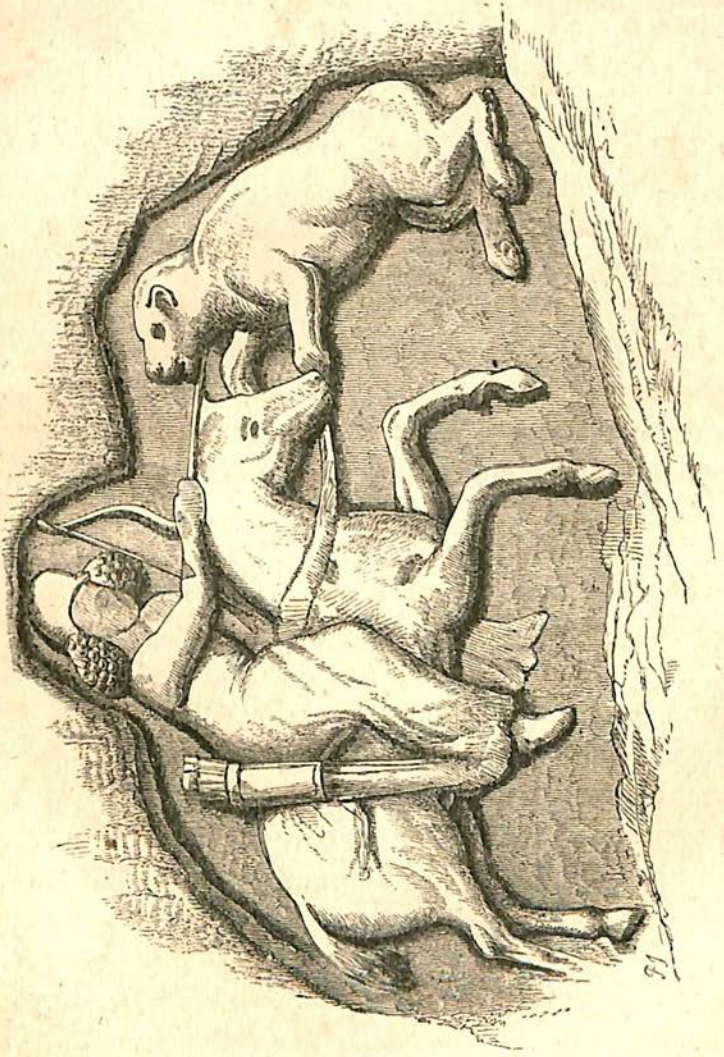
On the same rock, but in no very evident connection with the main representation, is a second relief, in which a Parthian cavalier, armed with a bow and arrows, and a spear, contends with a wild animal, seemingly a bear.[2] A long flowing robe here takes the place of the more ordinary tunic and trowsers. On the head is worn a rounded cap or tiara. The hair has the usual puffed-out appearance. The bow is carried in the left hand, and the quiver hangs from the saddle behind the rider,[3] while with his right

[1] Strab. xv. 3, § 15.

[2] M. Flandin doubts whether the animal is intended for a bear or a lion (*Voyage*, p. 185); but his representation fairly resembles the former, while it presents no likeness to the latter animal.

[3] Compare a representation of a Parthian warrior in M. Flandin's work (pl. 225).; and see also the coin of Labienus, which represents him equipped in Parthian fashion (supra, p. 189).

hand he thrusts his spear into the beast's neck. The execution of the whole tablet seems to have been rude;



Parthian bas-relief (after Flandin and Coste).

but it has suffered so much from time and weather, that no very decided judgment can be passed upon it.

Another still ruder representation occurs also on another face of the same rock. This consists of a

female figure reclining upon a couch, and guarded by three male attendants, one at the head of the couch unarmed, and the remaining two at its foot, seated, and armed with spears. The female has puffed-out hair, and carried in her right hand, which is outstretched, a wreath or chaplet. One of the spearmen has a curious rayed head-dress; and the other has a short streamer attached to the head of his spear. Below the main tablet are three rudely carved standing figures, representing probably other attendants.

This set of reliefs may perhaps be best regarded as forming a single series, the Parthian king being represented as engaged in hunting the bear, while the queen awaits his return upon her couch, and the chief Magus attached to the court makes prayer for the monarch's safety.

Such are the chief remains of Parthian æsthetic art. They convey an idea of decline below the standard reached by the Persians of the Achæmenian times, which was itself a decline from the earlier art of the Assyrians. Had they been the efforts of a race devoid of models, they might fairly have been regarded as not altogether without promise. But, considered as the work of a nation which possessed the Achæmenian sculptures, and which had moreover, to a certain extent, access to Greek examples,[1] they must be pronounced clumsy, coarse, and wanting in all the higher qualities of Fine Art. It is no wonder that they are scanty and exceptional. The nation which could pro-

[1] The sculptures at Persepolis, Nakhsh-i-Rustam, Behistun, &c., must always have been exposed to view, and would have sufficed to form a better taste than that which is actually found among the Parthians had they possessed fair æsthetic capacity. That, besides these, they possessed Greek models appears from the emblems upon their coins.

duce nothing better must have felt that its vocation was not towards the artistic, and that its powers had better be employed in other directions, e.g. in conquest and in organisation. It would seem that the Parthians perceived this, and therefore devoted slight attention to the Fine Arts, preferring to occupy themselves mainly with those pursuits in which they excelled; viz. war, hunting, and government.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Customs of the Parthians—in Religion; in War; in their Embassies and Dealings with Foreign Nations; at the Court; in Private Life. Extent of the Refinement to which they reached. Their gradual Decline in Taste and Knowledge.

Ἔθη ἔχοντα πολὺ μὲν τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ τὸ Σκυθικὸν, πλέον μέντοι τὸ χρήσιμον πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις κατόρθωσιν.—Strab. xi. 9, § 2.

VERY little is known as to the religion of the Parthians. It seems probable that during the Persian period they submitted to the Zoroastrian system,[1] which was generally maintained by the Achæmenian kings, acquiescing, like the great bulk of the conquered nations, in the religious views of their conquerors; but as this was not their own religion, we may conclude that they were at no time very zealous followers of the Bactrian prophet,[2] and that as age succeeded age they became continually more lukewarm in their feelings, and more lax in their religious practice. The essence of Zoroastrian belief was dualism—recognition of Ormazd as the great Principle of Good, and of Ahriman as the Principle of Evil. We need not doubt that, in word, the Parthians from first to last admitted this antagonism, and professed a belief in Ormazd as the supreme god, and a dread of Ahriman and his ministers. But

[1] By 'the Zoroastrian system' must be here understood, not the original teaching of Zoroaster as exhibited to us in the more ancient portions of the Zendavesta (see the author's *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii. pp. 322-344), but the mixed religion produced by the contact of Zoroastrianism with Magism, which was adopted by the Achæmenian monarchs from Xerxes downwards. (Ibid. pp. 344-354.)

[2] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6, p. 405, ed. Gronov.

practically, their religious aspirations rested, not on these dim abstractions, but on beings whose existence they could better realise, and whom they could feel to be less remote from themselves. The actual devotion of the Parthians was offered to the Sun and Moon, to deities who were supposed to preside over the royal house, and to ancestral idols which each family possessed, and conveyed with it from place to place with every change of habitation. The Sun was saluted at his rising,[1] was worshipped in temples, under the name of Mithra, with sacrifices and offerings;[2] had statues erected in his honour, and was usually associated with the lesser luminary.[3] The deities of the royal house were probably either genii, ministers of Ormazd, to whom was committed the special protection of the monarchs and their families, like the *baǵâha vithiyâ* of the Persians,[4] or else the ancestors of the reigning monarch, to whom a qualified divinity seems to have been assigned in the later times of the empire.[5] The Parthian kings usually swore by these deities on solemn occasions;[6] and other members of the royal family made use of the same oath.[7] The main worship, however, of the great mass of the people, even when they were of the royal stock, was concentrated upon ancestral images,[8] which had a place sacred to

[1] Herodian. iv. 30. Ἀσπασάμενοι τὸν Ἥλιον, ὡς ἔθος αὐτοῖς.

[2] The worship at Hatra (supra, p. 343) is probably a fair specimen of the Parthian cult of the Sun at other places. The Hatrene worship may have had an Arabian tinge, but, on the whole, it is probable that it conformed itself to that of the dominant people.

[3] Mos. Chor. *Hist. Arm.* ii. 74.

[4] *Persep. Inscr.* II. ll. 14, 22, 24.

[5] See Mos. Choren. l.s.c.

[6] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 3.

[7] Ibid. § 6.

[8] We have an account of this worship only in Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 5); he, however, appears to be perfectly familiar with it. He calls the images ἀφιδρύματα τῶν θεῶν and σεβάσματα, and the worship offered to them θεραπείαν or θρησκείαν.

them in each house, and received the constant adoration of the household.

In the early times of the empire the Magi were held in high repute, and most of the peculiar tenets and rites of the Magian religion were professed and followed by the Parthians. Elemental worship was practised. Fire was, no doubt, held sacred, and there was an especial reverence for rivers.[1] Dead bodies were not burned, but were exposed to be devoured by birds and beasts of prey, after which the dry bones were collected and placed in tombs.[2] The Magi formed a large portion of the great national council, which elected and, if need were, deposed the kings.[3] But in course of time much laxity was introduced. The Arsacid monarchs of Armenia allowed the Sacred Fire of Ormazd, which ought to have been kept continually burning, to go out;[4] and we can scarcely suppose but that the Parthian Arsacidæ shared their negligence. Respect for the element of fire so entirely passed away, that we hear of the later Parthians burning their dead.[5] The Magi fell into disrepute, and, if not expelled from their place in the council, at any rate found themselves despised and deprived of influence.[6] The later Parthian religion can have been little more than a worship of the Sun and Moon, and of the *teraphim*, or sacred images, which were the most precious possessions of each household.

While thus lax and changeful in their own religious practice, the Parthians were, naturally, tolerant of a variety of creeds among their subjects. Fire altars were maintained, and Zoroastrian zeal was allowed to

[1] Justin, xli. 3.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Strab. xi. 9, § 3.
[4] Mos. Chorен. *Hist. Arm.* l. s. c.
[5] Herodian. iv. 30.
[6] Agathias, ii. 26.

flourish in the dependent kingdom of Persia.[1] In the Greek cities the Olympian gods were permitted to receive the veneration of thousands,[2] while in Babylon, Nearda, and Nisibis the Jews enjoyed the free exercise of their comparatively pure and elevated religion.[3] No restrictions seem to have been placed on proselytism, and Judaism certainly boasted many converts from the heathen in Adiabêné, Charax Spasini, and elsewhere.[4] Christianity also penetrated the Parthian provinces to a considerable extent, and in one Parthian country, at any rate, seems to have become the state religion. The kings of Osrhoëné are thought to have been Christians from the time of the Antonines,[5] if not from that of our Lord;[6] and a flourishing church was certainly established at Edessa before the end of the second century.[7] The Parthian Jews who were witnesses of the miraculous events which signalised the day of Pentecost[8] may have, in some cases, taken with them the new religion to the land where they had their residence; or the Apostle, St. Thomas, may (as Eusebius declares[9]) have carried the Gospel into the regions

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[1] See above, p. 365.

[2] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6, p. 403; Jul. Capit. *Vit. Ver. Imp.* § 8.

[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 1, *et seq.*

[4] Ibid.

[5] See Bayer, *Hist. Edess. e numis illustrata*, iii. p. 173, and Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. i. p. 423.

[6] On the supposed letter of Abgarus, king of Edessa, to our Lord, and the reply to it, his cure by Thaddæus, and the conversion of his subjects, see Euseb. *Hist. Ec.* i. 13, and compare Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. vi. p. 596, and Burton, *Eccles. Hist. of First Three Centuries*, vol. i. pp. 328, 329.

[7] A council was held in Edessa on the proper time for keeping Easter in the year A.D. 198. (Burton, vol. ii. p. 216.) The Syriac (Peshito) version of the Scriptures was probably made for the Edessene Christians before the end of the first century (ib. vol. i. p. 328; Michaelis, *Introduction*, vii. § 8).

[8] Acts, ii. 9.

[9] *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 1. Rufinus, who wrote in the fourth century, says that St. Thomas was buried at Edessa. (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 5. Compare Socrat. iv. 18 and Sozom. vi. 18.)

beyond the Euphrates, and have planted the Christian Church in the countries out of which the Jewish Church sprang. Besides the flourishing community of Edessa, which was predominantly, if not wholly, Christian from the middle of the second century, many converts were, we are told, to be found among the inhabitants of Persia, Media, Parthia Proper, and even Bactria.[1] The infusion, however, was not sufficient to leaven to any serious extent the corrupt mass of heathenism into which it was projected; and we cannot say that the general character of the Parthian empire, or of the manners and customs of its subjects, was importantly affected by the new religion, though it had an extraordinary influence over individuals.

The Parthians were essentially a warlike people; and the chief interest which attaches to them is connected with their military vigour and ability. It is worth while to consider at some length the peculiarities of that military system which proved itself superior to the organisation of the Macedonians, and able to maintain for nearly three hundred years a doubtful contest with the otherwise irresistible Romans.

We are told that the Parthians had no standing army.[2] When war was proclaimed and the monarch needed a force, he made his immediate vassals acquainted with the fact, and requested each of them to marshal their troops, and bring them to a fixed rendezvous by a certain day.[3] The troops thus summoned were of two kinds, Parthian and foreign. The governors of the provinces, whether tributary kings or

[1] Bardesanes ap. Euseb. *Præp. Ev.* vi. 10. Bardesanes was a native of Edessa, and wrote a little after the middle of the second century.

[2] Herodian. iii. 1.

[3] Ibid. Ὁ Παρθυαῖος ἐπιστελεῖν ἔμελλε τοῖς σατράπαις δύναμιν ἀθροίζειν· οὕτω γὰρ εἴωθεν, ὑπηνίκα ἂν δεηθῇ στρατὸν συλλέγειν, τῷ μὴ ἔχειν μισθοφόρους καὶ συνεστὸς στρατιωτικόν.

satraps, called out the military strength of their respective districts, saw to their arming and provisioning, and, marching each at the head of his contingent, brought a foreign auxiliary force to the assistance of the Great King.[1] But the back-bone of the army, its main strength, the portion on which alone much reliance was placed, consisted of Parthians. Each Parthian noble was bound to call out his slaves and his retainers, to arm and equip them at his own expense, and bring them to the rendezvous by the time named.[2] The number of troops furnished by each noble varied according to his position and his means; we hear in one instance of their amounting to as many as 10,000,[3] while in another recorded case [4] the average number which each furnished was no more than 125. The various contingents had their own baggage-trains, consisting ordinarily of camels, in the proportion (as it would seem) of one to every ten fighting-men.[5]

A Parthian army consisted usually of both horse and foot, but in proportions unusual elsewhere. The foot soldiers were comparatively few in number, and were regarded as of small account.[6] Every effort was made to increase the amount and improve the equipment of the horsemen, who bore the brunt of every fight, and from whose exertions alone victory was hoped. Some-

[1] These auxiliary forces are not often mentioned by the Greek and Latin writers. Still occasionally we catch a glimpse of them. (See Joseph. xviii. 9, § 2; xx. 3. § 4, &c.)

[2] Justin, xli. 2.

[3] Plutarch, *Crass.* § 21. Εἶχε δὲ τοὺς σύμπαντας ἱππεῖς [ὁ Σουρήνας], ὑμοῦ πελάτας τε καὶ δούλους, μυρίων οὐκ ἀποδέοντας.

[4] Justin (l. s. c.) estimates the nobles in the Parthian army which fought against Antony at 400, the army itself at 50,000. This would give to each noble an average of 125 followers.

[5] This, at any rate, was the proportion in the case mentioned in note [3], where the 10,000 slaves and retainers of Surenas were accompanied by a thousand baggage-camels. (Plut. l. s. c.; Appian, *Parth.* p. 141.)

[6] Plut. *Crass.* § 19; Appian, *Parth.* p. 138.

times armies consisted of horsemen only,[1] or rather of horsemen followed by a baggage train composed of camels and chariots.

The horse were of two kinds, heavy and light. The heavy horsemen (*κατάφρακτοι*) wore coats of mail, reaching to their knees, composed of raw hide covered with scales of iron or steel,[2] very bright,[3] and capable of resisting a strong blow.[4] They had on their heads burnished helmets of Margian steel, whose glitter dazzled the spectator.[5] Their legs seem not to have been greaved, but encased in a loose trouser, which hung about the ankles and embarrassed the feet, if by any chance the horseman was forced to dismount.[6] They carried no shield,[7] being sufficiently defended by their coats of mail. Their offensive arms were a long spear (*κόντος*), which was of great strength and thickness,[8] and a bow and arrows of unusual size.[9] They likewise carried in their girdle a short sword[10] or knife (*μάχαιρα*), which might be used in close combat. Their horses were, like themselves, protected by a defence of scale armour,[11] which was either of steel or bronze.[12]

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[1] As that employed against Crassus. (See above, p. 159.)

[2] *Θώρακες ὡμοβύρσους καὶ σιδηροῦς.* Plut. *Crass.* § 25. Compare Justin, xli. 2, *ad fin.*

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 24.

[4] Ibid. §§ 18, 25.

[5] Ibid. § 24. *Κοάνη τοῦ Μαργιανοῦ σιδήρου στίλβοντος ὀξὺ καὶ πυκλώμασι.*

[6] Herodian. iv. 30, p. 173. The representation of a mailed warrior thus attired at Takht-i-Bostan (Ker Porter, vol. ii. Pl. 62), though of the Sassanian period, lends force to the statement of Herodian.

[7] Dio Cass. xl. 15. Compare Justin, xli. 2, *ad fin.*

[8] Plut. *Ant.* § 45; *Crass.* § 27; Dio Cass. xl. 22; Appian, *Parth.* p. 148; Herodian. iv. 30.

[9] App. *Parth.* p. 144. The size and strength of the bow which they used enabled the Parthians to deliver their arrows at a speed which was very unusual, and which made them most formidable archers. (See Plut. *Crass.* §§ 18 and 24.) The arrow was not seen till it struck, and it pierced easily through all customary armour.

[10] The knife, which was worn in private life (Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4), was certainly not laid aside in war. It was frequently employed to cut off the head of a dead enemy. (Plut. *Crass.* §§ 25 and 31.)

[11] Justin, l.s.c.

[12] Plut. *Crass.* § 24, *ad init.*

The light horse was armed with the same sort of bows and arrows as the heavy, but carried no spear and wore no armour. It was carefully trained to the management of the horse and the bow,[1] and was unequalled in the rapidity and dexterity of its movements. The archer delivered his arrows with as much precision and force in retreat as in advance, and was almost more feared when he retired than when he charged his foe.[2] Besides his arrows, the light horseman seems to have carried a sword,[3] and he no doubt wore also the customary knife in his belt.

We are told by one writer[4] that it was a practice of the Parthians to bring into battle a number of led horses, and that the riders from time to time exchanged their tired steeds for fresh ones, thus obtaining a great advantage over enemies who had no such practice. But the accounts which we have of Parthian engagements make no reference to this usage, which we can therefore scarcely suppose to have been adopted to any large extent. It may be doubted, also, if the practice could ever be one of much value, since the difficulty of managing led horses amid the tumult of a battle would probably more than counterbalance the advantage derivable from relays of fresh steeds.

During the later period of the monarchy, the Parthians, who had always employed camels largely in the conveyance of stores and baggage,[5] are said to have introduced a camel corps into the army itself, and to have derived considerable advantage from the new

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[1] Justin, l. s. c. 'Hos pari ac liberos suos cura habent, et equitare et sagittare magna industria docent.'

[2] Plut. *Crass.* § 24, *ad fin.*; Justin, xli. 2; Virg. *Georg.* iii. 31; Hor. *Od.* i. 19, 11; ii. 13, 16; Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 35.

[3] Dio Cass. xl. 24.

[4] Dio Cass. l.s.c.

[5] Plut. *Crass.* § 21; Appian, *Parthica*, p. 144.

arm.[1] The camels could bear the weight of the mailed warrior and of their own armour better than horses, and their riders were at once more safe in their elevated position and more capable of dealing effective blows upon the enemy. As a set-off, however, against these advantages, the spongy feet of the camel were found to be more readily injured by the *tribulus*, or caltrop, than the harder feet of the horse, and the corps was thus more easily disabled than an equal force of cavalry, if it could be tempted to pass over ground on which caltrops had been previously scattered.[2]

The Parthian tactics were of a simple kind, and differed little from those of other nations in the same region, which have depended mainly on their cavalry. To surround their foe, to involve him in difficulties, to cut off his supplies and his stragglers, and ultimately to bring him into a position where he might be overwhelmed by missiles, was the aim of all Parthian commanders of any military capacity. Their warfare was suited for defence rather than for attack, unless against contemptible enemies.[3] They were bad hands at sieges,[4] and seldom ventured to engage in them, though they would do so if circumstances required it.[5] They wearied of long campaigns, and if they did not find victory tolerably easy, were apt to retire and allow their foe to escape,[6] or baffle him by withdrawing their

[1] Herodian. iv. 28, 30.
[2] Ibid. p. 172.
[3] Dio Cass. xl. 15, *ad fin.*
[4] Justin, xli. 2:—'Obsessas expugnare urbes nesciunt.' Compare Dio Cass. xl. 29 (Ἀδύνατοι πολιορκῆσαί τε ἦσαν) and Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 4 ('Partho ad exsequendas obsidiones nulla cominus audacia').
[5] They were ready to have besieged Crassus in Carrhæ, if he had shut himself up in it (Plut. *Crass.* § 28). They actually besieged Antioch in B.C. 52, and Apamæa in B.C. 40. (See above, pp. 180 and 187.)
[6] See Plut. *Anton.* § 49. Their persistency against Macrinus is noticed as something strange and unusual (Herodian. iv. 30; pp. 173, 174).

forces into a distant and inaccessible region. After their early victories over Crassus and Antony, they never succeeded in preventing the steady advance of a Roman army into their territory, or in repulsing a determined attack upon their capital. Still they generally had their revenge after a short time. It was easy for the Romans to overrun Mesopotamia, but it was not so easy for them to hold it; and it was scarcely possible for them to retire from it after an occupation without disaster. The clouds of Parthian horse hung upon their retreating columns, straitened them for provisions, galled them with missiles, and destroyed those who could not keep up with the main body. The towns upon the line of their retreat revolted and shut their gates, defying even such commanders as Severus and Trajan. Of the six great expeditions of Rome against Parthia, one only, that of Avidius Cassius, was entirely successful. In every other case either the failure of the expedition was complete, or the glory of the advance was tarnished by disaster and suffering during the retreat.

The results of invading Parthia would have been even more calamitous to an assailant but for one weak point in the military system of the Parthians. They were excessively unwilling to venture near an enemy at night, and as a general rule abstained from all military movements during the hours of darkness.[1] As evening approached, they drew off to a considerable distance from their foe, and left him unmolested to retreat in any direction that he pleased. The reason of this probably was, not merely that they did not

[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 29:—Νυκτομαχεῖν οὐ πάτριον αὐτοῖς ἐστιν. Compare *Anton.* § 47.

fortify their camps;[1] but that, depending wholly on their horses, and being forced to hobble or tether them at night, they could not readily get into fighting order on a sudden during darkness. Once or twice in the course of their history, we find them departing from their policy of extreme precaution, and recommencing the pursuit of a flying foe before dawn; but it is noted as an unusual occurrence.[2]

It was also a general principle of Parthian warfare to abstain from campaigning during the winter.[3] So much depended upon the tension of their bow-strings, which any dampness relaxed, that their rule was to make all their expeditions in the dry time of their year, which lasted from early in the spring until late in the autumn. The rule was, however, transgressed upon occasions. Phraates II. made his attack upon Antiochus Sidetes, while the snow was still upon the ground;[4] and Volagases I. fell upon Pætus after the latter had sent his troops into winter quarters.[5] The Parthians could bear cold no less than heat; though it was perhaps rather in the endurance of the latter than of the former that they surpassed the Romans. The sun's rays were never too hot for them;[6] and they did not need water frequently or in large quantities. The Romans believed that they increased their ability of bearing thirst by means of certain drugs which they consumed;[7] but it may be questioned

[1] So Dio (xl. 24). But the real grounds of their usage, a usage common to them with the Persians, are better seen from what Xenophon says of the latter. (*Anab.* iii. 4, § 34. Compare *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iv. p. 138.)

[2] Παρὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς ἔτι νυκτὸς ἐδίωκον. (Plut. *Ant.* § 47.)

[3] Dio Cass. xl. 15; Plut. *Anton.* § 40.

[4] See above, p. 103.

[5] See above, p. 276.

[6] Τὸν ἥλιον φλογωδέστατον ὄντα ἀνέχονται τῇ συνηθείᾳ. (Dio Cass. l.s.c.)

[7] Ibid.

whether they really employed any other remedies than habit and resolution.

We find no use of chariots among the Parthians, except for the conveyance of the females, who accompanied the nobles upon their expeditions. The wives and concubines of the chiefs followed the camp in great numbers;[1] and women of a less reputable class, singers, dancers, and musicians, swelled the ranks of the supernumeraries.[2] Many of these were Greeks from Seleucia and other Macedonian towns.[3] The commissariat and transport departments are said to have been badly organised;[4] but some thousands of baggage camels always accompanied an army,[5] carrying stores and provisions. Of these a considerable portion were laden with arrows,[6] of which the supply was in this way rendered inexhaustible.

The use of the elephant in war was still more rare in Parthia than that of the chariot. While the Seleucid kings employed the animal to a large extent,[7] and its use was also probably known to the Greek princes of Bactria,[8] the Arsacidæ appear to have almost entirely neglected it. On one occasion alone do we find their employment of it mentioned,[9] and then we hear

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[1] Plutarch says that the general employed against Crassus was accompanied by 200 chariots containing his concubines (*Crass.* §. 21).

[2] Ibid. § 32. *Κατ' οὐρὰν τῆς φάλαγγος εἰς πόρνας καὶ κρόταλα καὶ ψαλμοὺς καὶ παννυχίδας ἀκολάστους μετὰ γυναικῶν τελευτῶσαν.*

[3] Ibid. *Σελευκιάδες ἑταῖραι μουσουργοί.*

[4] *Dio Cass.* xl. 15, *ad fin.*

[5] *Plut. Crass.* § 21. If the general employed against Crassus had a thousand baggage camels for his own slaves and retainers, the entire army may be presumed to have been accompanied by several thousands.

[6] Ibid. § 25, *ad init.*

[7] Polyb. x. 34, § 11; xxxi. 3, § 11; Strab. xv. 1, § 36; Plut. *Alex.* § 62.

[8] The elephant occurs on the coins of the Bactrian kings (Mionnet, *Supplément*, tom. viii. pp. 482, 485). One monarch, Demetrius, wears a head-dress made out of the head of an elephant (ibid. p. 473).

[9] Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 15.

of only a single animal, which is ridden by the monarch. Probably the unwieldy creature was regarded by the Parthians as too heavy and clumsy for the light and rapid movements of their armies, and was thus disused during the period of their supremacy, though again employed, after Parthia had fallen, by the Sassanidæ.[1]

The Parthians entered into battle with much noise and shouting.[2] They made no use of trumpets or horns, but employed instead the kettledrum, which resounded from all parts of the field when they made their onset.[3] Their attack was furious. The mailed horsemen charged at speed, and often drove their spears through the bodies of two enemies at a blow.[4] The light horse and the foot, when any was present, delivered their arrows with precision and with extraordinary force. But if the assailants were met with a stout resistance, the first vigour of the attack was rarely long maintained. The Parthian warriors grew quickly weary of an equal contest, and, if they could not force their enemy to give way, soon changed their tactics. Pretending panic, dispersing, and beating a hasty retreat, they endeavoured to induce their foe to pursue hurriedly and in disorder, being ready at any moment to turn and take advantage of the least appearance of confusion. If these tactics failed, as they commonly did after they came to be known, the simulated flight was generally converted into a real one; further

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[1] See Amm. Marc. xxv. 3, 6, &c.; and compare Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. i. p. 170; Ockley, *History of the Saracens*, p. 143; Ker Porter, *Travels*, vol. ii. Pl. 63 and 64.

[2] Plut. *Crass.* § 26; Herodian. iv. 30.

[3] Justin, xli. 2; Plut. *Crass.* § 23, *sub fin.*; Appian, *Parth.* p. 143.

[4] Plut. *Crass.* § 27.

conflict was avoided, or at any rate deferred to another occasion.[1]

When the Parthians wished to parley with an enemy, they unstrung their bows,[2] and advancing with the right hand outstretched,[3] asked for a conference. They are accused by the Romans of sometimes using treachery on such occasions, but, except in the single case of Crassus, the charge of bad faith cannot be sustained against them. On solemn occasions, when the intention was to discuss grounds of complaint or to bring a war to an end by the arrangement of terms of peace, a formal meeting was arranged between their representatives and those of their enemy, generally on neutral ground, as on an island in the Euphrates, or on a bridge constructed across it.[4] Here the chiefs of the respective nations met, accompanied by an equal number of guards, while the remainder of their forces occupied the opposite banks of the river. Matters were discussed in friendly fashion, the Greek language being commonly employed as the vehicle of communication;[5] after which festivities usually took place, the two chiefs mutually entertaining each other, or accepting in common the hospitalities of a third party.[6] The terms of peace agreed upon were reduced to

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[1] Compare Dio Cass. xl. 15; Plut. *Ant.* §§ 29, 42, 45; Herodian. iv. 30. Justin's summary expresses a fair judgment:—'Pugnant procurrentibus equis, aut terga dantibus; sæpe etiam fugam simulant, ut incautiores adversum vulnera insequentes habeant. . . . Nec pugnare diu possunt; cæterum intolerandi forent, si quantus his impetus est, vis tanta et perseverantia esset' (xl. 2).

[2] Plut. *Crass.* § 30; *Anton.* §§ 46 and 49.

[3] Plutarch, l.s.c.

[4] Vell. Paterc. ii. 101; Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 5.

[5] On the Parthian knowledge of Greek, see Plut. *Crass.* § 33. I gather from Dio and Herodian that Greek was the language used in the diplomatic intercourse of the Parthians and Romans.

[6] See the passages cited in note [4].

writing;[1] hands were grasped as a sign that faith was pledged;[2] and oaths having been interchanged,[3] the conference broke up, and the chiefs returned to their respective residences.

Besides negotiating by means of conferences, the Parthian monarchs often sent out to neighbouring states, and in return received from them, formal embassies. The ambassadors in every case conveyed, as a matter of course, gifts to the prince to whom they were accredited,[4] which might consist of articles of value, or of persons. Augustus included an Italian slave-girl [5] among the presents which he transmitted to Phraates IV.; and Artabanus III. sent a Jewish giant to Tiberius.[6] The object of an embassy was sometimes simply to congratulate; but more often the ambassadors were instructed to convey certain demands, or proposals, from their own prince to the head of the other nation, whereto his assent was required, or requested. These proposals were commonly formulated in a letter from the one prince to the other,[7] which it was the chief duty of the ambassadors to convey safely. Free powers to conclude a treaty at their discretion were rarely, or never, entrusted to them. Their task was merely to deliver the royal letter, to explain its terms, if they were ambiguous, and to carry back to their own monarch the reply of the foreign sovereign. The sanctity of the ambassa-

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[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 31. Δεῖν δὲ γράψασθαι τὰς συνθήκας. Compare Herodian. iv. 18 and 30.

[2] Hence such phrases as 'renovari *dextras*' (Tac. *Ann.* ii. 58), and the like.

[3] Herodian. iv. 30.

[4] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4; 4, § 5; Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 25; Herodian. iv. 18.

[5] See above, p. 214.

[6] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 4, § 5.

[7] On these letters, see Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 24; Dio Cass. lv. 11; Sueton. *Tiber.* § 66; Herodian. iv. 18, 19, 30, &c.

dorial character was invariably respected by the Parthians, who are never even taxed with a violation of it.

As a security for the performance of engagements, or for the permanent maintenance of a friendly attitude, it was usual in the East during the Parthian period to require, and give, hostages. The princes who occupied the position of Parthian feudatories gave hostages to their suzerain, who were frequently their near relations, as sons or brothers.[1] And a practice grew up of the Parthian monarchs themselves depositing their own sons or brothers with the Roman Emperor, at first perhaps merely for their own security,[2] but afterwards as pledges for their good behaviour.[3] Such hostages lived at the expense of the Roman court, and were usually treated with distinction. In the event of a rupture between their country and Rome, they had little to fear. Rome found her advantage in employing them as rivals to a monarch with whom she had quarrelled, and did not think it necessary to punish them for his treachery or inconstancy.

The magnificence of the Parthian court is celebrated in general terms by various writers, but not very many particulars have come down to us respecting it. We know that it was migratory, moving from one of the chief cities of the empire to another at different seasons of the year,[4] and that owing to the vast number of the persons composing it, there was a difficulty sometimes in providing for their subsistence upon the road.[5] The court comprised the usual extensive harem of an Oriental prince, consisting of a single recognised

[1] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 2, § 3.
[2] Ibid. xviii. 2, § 4; Tacit. *Ann.* ii. 1; Strab. xvi. 1, § 28.
[3] Joseph. xviii. 4, § 5.
[4] See above, p. 92.
[5] Strab. xi. 9, § 1.

queen, and a multitude of secondary wives or concubines. The legitimate wife of the prince was commonly a native, and in most cases was selected from the royal race of the Arsacidæ;[1] but sometimes she was the daughter of a dependent monarch,[2] and she might even be a slave raised by royal favour from that humble position.[3] The concubines were frequently Greeks.[4] Both wives and concubines remained ordinarily in close seclusion, and we have little mention of them in the Parthian annals. But in one instance at any rate, a queen, brought up in the notions of the West, succeeded in setting Oriental etiquette at defiance, took the direction of affairs out of the hands of her husband, and subsequently ruled the empire in conjunction with her son.[5] Generally, however, the Parthian kings were remarkably free from the weakness of subservience to women, and managed their kingdom with a firm hand, without allowing either wives or ministers to obtain any undue ascendency over them. In particular, we may note that they never, so far as appears, fell under the baleful influence of eunuchs, who, from first to last, play a very subordinate part in the Parthian history.[6]

The dress of the monarch was commonly the loose Median robe, which had been adopted from the Medes by the Persians. This flowed down to the feet in numerous folds, enveloping and concealing the entire

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[1] Herodian. iv. 19.
[2] Strab. xi. 13, § 1.
[3] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4.
[4] Plut. *Crass.* § 32, *ad fin.*
[5] See above, p. 220.
[6] Philostratus is, so far as I know, the only writer who mentions the employment of eunuchs by the Parthians. According to him, eunuchs occupied that position in the royal harem which is usual in the East (*Vit. Apoll.* i. 37), and held sometimes the office of satrap in the provinces (ib. i. 21).

figure.[1] Trousers and a tunic were probably worn beneath it, the latter of linen, the former of silk or wool. As head-dress, the king wore either the mere diadem, which was a band or ribbon, passed once or oftener round the head, and terminating in two long ends which fell down behind,[2] or else a more pretentious cap, which in the earlier times was a sort of Scythian pointed helmet,[3] and in the later a rounded tiara, sometimes adorned with pearls or gems.[4] His neck appears to have been generally encircled with two or three collars or necklaces, and he frequently wore ear-rings in his ears. The beard was almost always cultivated, and, with the hair, was worn variously. Generally both hair and beard were carefully curled; but sometimes they depended in long straight locks. Mostly the beard was pointed, but occasionally it was worn square. In later times a fashion arose of puffing out the hair at either side extravagantly, so as to give it the appearance of a large bushy wig.[5]

In war the monarch seems to have exchanged his Median robe for a short cloak, reaching half way down the thigh.[6] His head was protected by a helmet,

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[1] See Justin, xli. 2. The obverse of Parthian coins frequently exhibits the monarch thus apparelled.

Parthian King, from a coin.

[2] Compare the engravings on pp. 220, 223, 228, &c.

[3] See above, p. 91.

[4] See the woodcuts on pp. 91 and 320.

[5] See above, p. 228.

[6] On the obverse of the early Parthian coins the monarch is usually represented in this attire.

Parthian King, from an early coin.

and he carried the national arm of offence, the bow. He usually took the field on horseback, but was sometimes mounted on an elephant,[1] trained to encounter the shock of battle. Gold and silver were abundantly used in the trappings of his steed and in his arms. He generally took the command, and mingled freely in the fight, though he might sometimes shrink without reproach from adventuring his own person.[2] His guards fought about him; and he was accompanied by attendants, whose duty it was to assist him in mounting on horseback and dismounting.[3]

The status of the queen was not much below that of her royal consort. She wore a tiara far more elaborate than his, and, like him, exhibited the diadem. Her neck was encircled with several necklaces.[4] As the title of Theos, 'God,' was often assumed by her husband, so she was allowed the title of 'Goddess' (Θεά), or 'Heavenly Goddess' (Θεὰ οὐρανία).

Separate apartments were of course assigned to the queen, and to the royal concubines in the various palaces. These were buildings on a magnificent scale, and adorned with the utmost richness. Philostratus, who wrote in Parthian times,[5] thus describes the royal palace at Babylon. 'The palace is roofed with brass, and a bright light flashes from it. It has chambers for the women, and chambers for the men, and porti-

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[1] Supra, p. 410.

[2] Plut. *Anton.* § 44.

[3] Ἀναβολεῖς. See Plut. *Crass.* § 31.

[4] See the woodcut, p. 220.

[5] Philostratus was born about A.D. 172, and lived to about A.D. 244, or a little later. He was thus contemporary with the Parthian kings Volagases III., Volagases IV., Volagases V., and Artabanus, the last monarch. His life of Apollonius of Tyana, which contains the description given in the text, as well as other curious information about Parthia, is no doubt an historical romance; but its local colouring seems intended to be correct, and is probably not far from the truth.

coes, partly glittering with silver, partly with cloth-of-gold embroideries, partly with solid slabs of gold, let into the walls, like pictures. The subjects of the embroideries are taken from the Greek mythology, and include representations of Andromeda, of Amymoné, and of Orpheus, who is frequently repeated . . . . Datis is moreover represented, destroying Naxos with his fleet, and Artaphernes besieging Eretria, and Xerxes gaining his famous victories. You behold the occupation of Athens, and the battle of Thermopylæ, and other points still more characteristic of the great Persian war, rivers drunk up and disappearing from the face of the earth, and a bridge stretched across the sea, and a canal cut through Athos . . . One chamber for the men has a roof fashioned into a vault like the heaven, composed entirely of sapphires, which are the bluest of stones, and resemble the sky in colour. Golden images of the gods whom they worship, are set up about the vault, and show like stars in the firmament. This is the chamber in which the king delivers his judgments. Four golden magic-wheels hang from its roof, and threaten the monarch with the Divine Nemesis, if he exalts himself above the condition of man. These wheels are called "the tongues of the gods," and are set in their places by the Magi who frequent the palace.' [1]

The state and pomp which surrounded the monarch seem scarcely to have fallen short of the Achæmenian standard. Regarded as in some sort divine during his life, and always an object of national worship after his death, the 'Brother of the Sun and Moon' [2] occupied

[1] Philostr., *Vit. Apoll. Tyan.* i. 25.

[2] Amm. Marc. xxiii. 6; p. 397.

a position far above that of the most exalted of his subjects. Tributary monarchs were shocked, when, in times of misfortune, the 'Great King' stooped to solicit their aid, and appeared before them in the character of a suppliant, shorn of his customary splendour.[1] Nobles coveted the dignity of 'King's Friend,' and were content to submit to blows and buffets at the caprice of their royal master, before whom they prostrated themselves in adoration after each castigation.[2] The Parthian monarch dined in solitary grandeur, extended on his own special couch, and eating from his own special table, which was placed at a greater elevation than those of his guests.[3] His 'friend' sat on the ground at his feet, and was fed like a dog by scraps from his master's board. Guards, ministers, and attendants of various kinds surrounded him, and were ready at the slightest sign to do his bidding. Throughout the country he had numerous 'Eyes' and 'Ears'[4]—officers who watched his interests and sent him word of whatever touched his safety. The bed on which the monarch slept was of gold, and subjects were forbidden to take their repose on couches of this rich material.[5] No stranger could obtain access to him unless introduced by the proper officer; and it was expected that all who asked an audience would be prepared with some present of high value.[6] For the gifts received the monarch made a suitable return, allowing those whom he especially favoured to choose the presents that they preferred.[7]

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[1] See the narrative in Josephus (*Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, §§ 1, 2); and compare above, p. 246.

[2] Posidon. ap. Athen. *Deipn.* iv. 13; p. 152, F.

[3] Ibid. p. 153, A.

[4] Philostrat. *Vit. Apoll. Tyan.* i. 21 and 28.

[5] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xx. 3, § 3.

[6] Philostrat. *Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 28.

[7] Ibid. i. 34.

The power and dignity of the Parthian nobles was greater than that usually enjoyed by any subjects of an Oriental king. Rank in Parthia being hereditary and not simply official, the 'megistanes' were no mere creatures of the monarch, but a class which stood upon its own indefeasible rights. As they had the privilege of electing to the throne upon a vacancy, and even that of deposing a duly elected monarch,[1] the king could not but stand in wholesome awe of them, and feel compelled to treat them with considerable respect and deference. Moreover, they were not without a material force calculated to give powerful support to their constitutional privileges. Each stood at the head of a body of retainers accustomed to bear arms and to serve in the wars of the Empire. Together these bodies constituted the strength of the army; and though the royal body-guard might perhaps have been capable of dealing successfully with each group of retainers separately, yet such an *esprit de corps* was sure to animate the nobles generally, that they would make common cause in case one of their number were attacked, and would support him against the crown with the zeal inspired by self-interest. Thus the Parthian nobility were far more powerful and independent than any similar class under the Achæmenian, Sassanian, Modern Persian, or Turkish sovereigns. They exercised a real control over the monarch, and had a voice in the direction of the Empire. Like the great feudal vassals of the Middle Ages, they from time to time quarrelled with their liege lord, and disturbed the tranquillity of the kingdom by prolonged and dangerous civil wars; but these contentions served

[1] See above, p. 86.

to keep alive a vigour, a life, and a spirit of sturdy independence very unusual in the East, and gave a stubborn strength to the Parthian monarchy, in which Oriental governments have for the most part been wanting.

There were probably several grades of rank among the nobles. The highest dignity in the kingdom, next to the Crown, was that of Surena, or 'Field-Marshal;' and this position was hereditary in a particular family,[1] which can have stood but a little below the royal house in wealth and consequence. The head of this noble house is stated to have at one time brought into the field as many as 10,000 retainers and slaves, of whom a thousand were heavy-armed.[2] It was his right to place the diadem on the king's brow at his coronation. The other nobles lived for the most part on their domains, but took the field at the head of their retainers in case of war, and in peace sometimes served the offices of satrap, vizier, or royal councillor. The wealth of the class was great;[3] its members were inclined to be turbulent, and, like the barons of the European kingdoms, acted as a constant check and counterpoise to the royal dignity.

Next to war, the favourite employment of the king and of the nobles was hunting.[4] The lion continued in the wild state an occupant of the Mesopotamian river-banks and marshes;[5] and in other parts of the empire

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[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 21. Κατὰ γένος μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκέκτητο βασιλεῖ γινομένῳ Πάρθων ἐπιτιθέναι τὸ διάδημα πρῶτον.

[2] Ibid. l.s.c.

[3] This appears especially in the case of the officer employed against Crassus, who was attended in the field by 200 litters containing his wives and concubines. In a less degree, it appears also in the case of the Mithridates attacked by Anilai. (See above, p. 242.)

[4] See Philostr. *Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 22 and 38; Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4; Justin, xli. 5; Suet. *Caii Vit.* § 5.

[5] Philostr. i. 22.

bears, leopards, and even tigers abounded.[1] Thus the higher kinds of sport were readily obtainable. The ordinary practice, however, of the monarch and his courtiers seems to have fallen short of the true sportsman's ideal. Instead of seeking the more dangerous kinds of wild beasts in their native haunts, and engaging with them under the conditions designed by nature, the Parthians were generally content with a poorer and tamer method. They kept lions, leopards, and bears in enclosed parks, or 'paradises,' and found pleasure in the pursuit and slaughter of these denaturalised and half-domesticated animals.[2] The employment may still, even under these circumstances, have contained an element of danger which rendered it exciting; but it was a poor substitute for the true sport which the 'mighty Hunter before the Lord'[3] had first practised in these regions.

The ordinary dress of the Parthian noble was a long loose robe reaching to the feet,[4] under which he wore a vest and trousers.[5] Bright and varied colours were affected, and sometimes dresses were interwoven or embroidered with gold.[6] In seasons of festivity garlands of fresh flowers were worn upon the head.[7] A long knife or dagger was carried at all times,[8] which might be used either as an implement or as a weapon.

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[1] The tiger has always been a native of Hyrcania and the low tract south of the Caspian. Bears have always inhabited Mount Zagros, while leopards abound in Mesopotamia.

[2] Philostr. i. 38. *Θήρια βεβασανισμένα καὶ παρὰ τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν δεδουλωμένα.*

[3] Gen. x. 9.

[4] Justin, xli. ii. 'Vestis perlucida et fluida.' Cf. Herodian. iv. 20.

[5] Lucian. *De conscrib. hist.* § 19.

[6] Herodian. l.s.c.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 2, § 4. *Μαχαιροφορεῖν ἔθος ἅπασίν.*

In the earlier period of the empire the Parthian was noted as a spare liver;[1] but, as time went on, he aped the vices of more civilised peoples, and became an indiscriminate eater[2] and a hard drinker.[3] Game formed a main portion of his diet;[4] but he occasionally indulged in pork,[5] and probably in other sorts of butcher's meat. He ate leavened bread with his meat, and various kinds of vegetables.[6] The bread, which was particularly light and porous, seems to have been imported sometimes by the Romans, who knew it as *panis aquaticus* or *panis Parthicus*.[7] Dates were also consumed largely by the Parthians,[8] and in some parts of the country grew to an extraordinary size. A kind of wine was made from them; and this seems to have been the intoxicating drink in which the nation generally indulged too freely.[9] That made from the dates of Babylon was the most highly esteemed, and was reserved for the use of the king and the higher order of satraps.[10]

Of the Parthian feasts, music was commonly an accompaniment. The flute, the pipe, the drum, and the instrument called *sambuca*, appear to have been known to them;[11] and they understood how to combine these instruments in concerted harmony. They are said to

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[1] Justin, xli. 3, ad fin. 'In cibo parcus.'

[2] Pliny, *H.N.* xi. 53.

[3] Ibid. xiv. 22. According to Pliny, the Parthians of his time (A.D. 50–70) ate and drank so immoderately as to render their breath unpleasant. To remedy this defect, the nobles were in the habit of munching the pips of citrons (*H.N.* xi. 53; xii. 3).

[4] Justin says—'Carne non nisi venatibus quæsita vescuntur' (l.s.c.); but we must correct him as to the later period of the Empire from Philostratus (*Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 21).

[5] Philostr. l.s.c.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Plin. *H.N.* xviii. 11.

[8] Philostr. l.s.c.

[9] Compare Plin. *H.N.* xiv. 16 with Philostr. *Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 21; p. 27.

[10] Philostr. l.s.c.

[11] Herodian. iv. 20; Athen. *Deipn.* xiv. 8.

have closed their feasts with dancing—an amusement of which they were inordinately fond[1]—but this was probably the case only with the lower class of people. Dancing in the East, if not associated with religion, is viewed as degrading, and, except as a religious exercise, is not indulged in by respectable persons.

The separation of the sexes was very decided in Parthia. The women took their meals, and passed the greater portion of their life, apart from the men.[2] Veils were commonly worn, as in modern Mohammedan countries; and it was regarded as essential to female delicacy that women, whether married or single, should converse freely with no males but either their near relations or eunuchs. Adultery was punished with great severity;[3] but divorce was not difficult, and women of rank released themselves from the nuptial bond on light grounds of complaint, without much trouble.[4] Polygamy was the established law; and every Parthian was entitled, besides his chief wife, to maintain as many concubines as he thought desirable.[5] Some of the nobles supported an excessive number;[6] but the expenses of the seraglio prevented the generality from taking much advantage of the indulgence which the law permitted.

The degree of refinement and civilisation which the Parthians reached is difficult to determine with accuracy. In mimetic art their remains certainly do not show much taste or sense of beauty.[7] There is some

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[1] Philostr. l.s.c.

[2] Justin, xli. 3. 'Feminis non convivia tantum virorum, verum etiam conspectum interdicunt.'

[3] Justin, l.s.c. 'Nec ulla delicta adulterio gravius vindicant.'

[4] See the story told by Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 6.

[5] Justin, xli. 3, ad init. 'Uxores . . . singuli plures habent'

[6] Plut. *Crass.* § 21.

[7] See above, p. 396.

ground to believe that their architecture had merit; but the existing monuments can scarcely be taken as representations of pure Parthian work, and may have owed their excellence (in some measure, at any rate) to foreign influence. Still, the following particulars, for which there is good evidence, seem to imply that the nation had risen in reality far above that 'barbarism' which it was the fashion of the Greek and Roman writers to ascribe to it. In the first place, the Parthians had a considerable knowledge of foreign languages. Plutarch tells us that Orodes, the opponent of Crassus, was acquainted with the Greek language and literature, and could enjoy the representation of a play of Euripides.[1] The general possession of such knowledge, at any rate by the kings and the upper classes, seems to be implied by the use of the Greek letters and language in the legends upon coins and in inscriptions. Other languages were also to some extent cultivated. The later kings almost invariably placed a Semitic legend upon their coins; and there is one instance of a Parthian prince adopting an Arian legend of the type known as Bactrian.[2] Josephus, moreover, regarded the Parthians as familiar with Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, and wrote his history of the Jewish War in his own native tongue, before he put out his Greek version, for the benefit especially of the Parthians, among whom he declares that he had many readers.[3]

Though the Parthians had, so far as we can tell, no native literature, yet writing was familiar to them, and was widely used in matters of business. Not only were

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[1] Plut. *Crass.* § 32.

[2] See *Num. Chron.* vi. p. 104; Lindsay, *History and Coinage*, &c., p. 208; and, for the Bactrian writing, compare Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, plates.

[3] *Bell. Jud.* Proem. § 1 and § 2.

negotiations carried on with foreign powers by means of despatches,[1] but the affairs of the empire generally were conducted by writing. A custom-house system was established along the frontier, and all commodities liable to duty that entered the country were registered in a book[2] at the time of entry by the custom-house officer. In the great cities where the Court passed a portion of the year, account was kept of the arrival of strangers, whose names and descriptions were placed upon record by the keepers of the gates.[3] The orders of the Crown were signified in writing to the satraps;[4] and they doubtless corresponded with the Court in the same way. In the earlier times the writing material commonly used was linen; but shortly before the time of Pliny, the Parthians began to make paper from the papyrus, which grew in the neighbourhood of Babylon, though they still employed in preference the old material.[5]

There was a considerable trade between Parthia and Rome, carried on by means of a class of merchants.[6] Parthia imported from Rome various metals, and numerous manufactured articles of a high class. Her principal exports were textile fabrics and spices.[7] The textile fabrics seem to have been produced chiefly in Babylonia, and to have consisted of silks, carpets, and

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[1] See above, p. 412.

[2] Philostr. *Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 20.

[3] Ibid. i. 27, ad fin. Ἤρετο ὄνομά τε αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅ τι ἐπιτηδεύων, καὶ ὅ τι φοιτῶν; καὶ ἀπογραψάμενος ταῦτα ἐς γραμματεῖον, στολήν τε αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶδος, ἐκεῖνον μὲν περιμεῖναι κελεύει.

[4] Herodian. iii. 1. Ὁ δὲ Παρθυαῖος ἐπιστελεῖν ἔφη τοῖς σατράπαις. Herodian uses ἐπιστέλλειν in the sense of ἐπιστολὰς πέμπειν constantly. Compare iv. 18. ἐπιστέλλει τῷ βασιλεῖ Παρθυαίων . . . . τὰ δὲ γράμματα ἔλεγεν. iv. 21. ἐπιστέλλει τῇ συγκλήτῳ. v. 1. ἐπιστέλλει τῷ τε δήμῳ Ῥωμαίων καὶ τῇ συγκλήτῳ . . . ἀναγνωθείσης δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἐπιστολῆς.

[5] Plin. *H.N.* xiii. 11, ad fin.

[6] Herodian. iv. 18. Δι' ἐμπόρων.

[7] Ibid.

coverlets.[1] The silks were largely used by the Roman ladies.[2] The coverlets, which were patterned with various colours, fetched enormous prices, and were regarded as fit adornments of the Imperial palace.[3] Among the spices exported, the most celebrated were bdellium, and the *juncus odoratus* or odoriferous bulrush.[4]

The Parthians had many liberal usages which imply a fairly advanced civilisation. Their tolerance of varieties in religion has been already mentioned.[5] Even in political matters they seem to have been free from the narrowness which generally characterises barbarous nations. They behaved well to prisoners,[6] admitted foreigners freely to offices of high trust,[7] gave an asylum to refugees, and treated them with respect and kindness,[8] were scrupulous observers of their pledged word,[9] and eminently faithful to their treaty obligations.[10] On the other hand, it must be admitted that they had some customs which indicate a tinge of barbarism. They used torture for the extraction of

[1] Compare Plin. *H.N.* viii. 48; xi. 22, 23; and Athen. *Deipn.* v. p. 197. Strabo's statement that Borsippa was in his day 'a great staple of the linen trade' (λινουργεῖον μέγα, xvi. i. § 7) is also an indication that manufactures flourished under the Parthians.

[2] Plin. *H.N.* xi. 23. The use of silk in Parthia is noted as early as B.C. 54, when the flags attached to their standards are said to have been made of it (Florus, iii. 11).

[3] Plin. *H.N.* viii. 48.

[4] Ibid. xii. 9; xxi. 18.

[5] Supra, p. 400.

[6] Euseb. *Chron. Can.* i. 40, § 18, ad fin.

[7] Note, as instances, the employment of Labienus in high command (supra, p. 187) and the satrapial dignity of the Jews, Asinai and Anilai (Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, §§ 4–7).

[8] Dio Cass. xlviii. 24; Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 7, § 2.

[9] Joseph. *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 9, § 3. Οὐ γὰρ ἂν ψεύσαιτό τις δεξιῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δόσεως γενομένης.

[10] The opposite statement of Justin ('Fides dictis promissisque nulla nisi quatenus expedit,' xli. 3, ad fin.), and the sneer of Horace ('Parthis mendacior,' *Ep.* I. ii. 112) are contradicted by the whole tenor of Parthian history, and must be considered as merely parallel to the charges of 'Punic perfidy,' alleged by Livy and others.

answers from reluctant persons,[1] employed the scourge to punish trifling offences,[2] and, in certain cases, condescended to mutilate the bodies of their dead enemies.[3] Their addiction to intemperance is also a barbaric trait. They were, no doubt, on the whole, less civilised than either the Greeks or Romans; but the difference does not seem to have been so great as represented by the classical writers.

Speaking broadly, the position that they occupied was somewhat similar to that which the Turks hold in the system of modern Europe. They had a military strength which caused them to be feared and respected, a vigour of administration[4] which was felt to imply many sterling qualities. A certain coarseness and rudeness attached to them which they found it impossible to shake off; and this drawback was exaggerated by their rivals into an indication of irreclaimable barbarity. Except in respect of their military prowess, it may be doubtful if justice is done them by any classical writer. They were not merely the sole rival which dared to stand up against Rome in the interval between B.C. 65 and A.D. 226, but they were a rival falling in many respects very little below the great power whose glories have thrown them so much into the shade. They maintained from first to last a freedom unknown to later Rome; they excelled the Romans in toleration and in liberal treatment of foreigners, they equalled them in manufactures and in material prosperity, and they fell but little short of them in the extent and

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[1] Philostr. *Vit. Ap. Tyan.* i. 21.

[2] Posid. ap. Athen. *Deipn.* iv. 13; p. 152, F.

[3] Plut. *Crass.* § 31.

[4] Compare the remarks of Strabo —αἴτιος δ' ὁ βίος αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἤθη τὰ ἔχοντα πολὺ μὲν τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ τὸ Σκυθικόν, πλέον μέντοι τὸ χρήσιμον πρὸς ἡγεμονίαν. xi. 9, § 2.

productiveness of their dominions. They were the second power in the world for nearly three centuries, and formed a counterpoise to Rome which greatly checked Roman decline, and, by forcing the Empire to exert itself, prevented stagnation and corruption.

It must, however, be confessed, that the tendency of the Parthians was to degenerate. Although the final blow was struck in an unexpected quarter, and perhaps surprised the victors as much as the vanquished, still it is apparent that for a considerable space before the revolt of Artaxerxes the Parthian Empire had shown signs of failing strength, and had tended rapidly towards decay and ruin. The constant quarrels among the Arsacidæ and the incipient disintegration of the Empire have been noticed.[1] It may be added here that a growing barbarism, a decline in art and letters is observable in the Parthian remains, such as have usually been found to accompany the decrepitude of a nation. The coinage has from first to last a somewhat rude character, which indicates that it is native, and not the production of Greek artists.[2] But on the earlier coins the type, though not indicative of high art, is respectable, and the legends are, with few exceptions,[3] perfectly correct and classical. Barbarism first creeps in

[1] See above, pp. 368, 369.

[2] Eckhel thought that the entire series of tetradrachms was Greek and not Parthian, being the issue of the semi-independent Greek towns in the Parthian dominions (*Doctr. Num. Vet.* vol. iii. pp. 549, 550). M. Lenormant, in his work on the early Parthian coins, went further, and maintained (p. 3) that all the good coins were of Greek workmanship, and only the barbarous ones native. But the best authorities seem now convinced that (excepting a few tetradrachms of Mithridates I.; see p. 69) the coins are all, in the strictest sense, Parthian.

[3] E.g. ΑΠΙΦΑΙΝΟΥΣ appears for ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ on a coin ascribed to Mithridates I. (Lindsay, p. 166); ΠΑΚΟΡΥ for ΠΑΚΟΡΟΥ on coins of Orodes I. (ib. p. 170), &c.

about the reign of Gotarzes,[1] A.D. 42–51. It increases as time goes on, until, from about A.D. 133, the Greek legend upon the coins becomes indistinct and finally unintelligible, the letters being strewn about the surface of the coin, like dead soldiers over a field of battle. It is clear that the later directors of the mint were completely ignorant of Greek, and merely attempted to reproduce on the coin some semblance of a language which neither they nor their countrymen understood. Such a condition of a coinage is almost without parallel, and indicates a want of truth and honesty in the conduct of affairs which implies deep-seated corruption. The Parthians must have lost the knowledge of Greek about A.D. 130, yet still a pretence of using the language was kept up. On the tetradrachms—comparatively rare coins—no important mistake was committed; but on the more usual drachm, from the time of Gotarzes, the most absurd errors were introduced, and thenceforth perpetuated.[2] The old inscription was, in a certain sense, imitated, but every word of it ceased to be legible: the old figures disappeared in an indistinct haze, and—if we except the head and name of the king (written now in a Semitic character)—the whole emblazonment of the coin became unmeaning. A degeneracy less marked, but still sufficiently clear to the numis-

[1] The famous legend of Gotarzes, which should have run (as is supposed) ΓΩΤΕΡΖΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΗΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΚΕΚΑΗΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΥ appears under the form of ΓΩΤΕΡΖΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕ . . ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΥΟΣ ΚΕΚΑΛΥΑΣΝΟΣ ΑΡΤΑΒΑΝΟΥ (Lindsay, p. 153).

[2] Among these, one of the most remarkable is the corruption of the family title ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ (Arsaces) into a form which is either actually or nearly ΑΡΙΑΝΟΥ, a geographical or ethnic appellative. Other errors merely orthographic, are the substitution of Χ for Κ in ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ, which, from the time of Phraates IV., is almost uniformly written ΔΙΧΑΙΟΥ; of Χ for Ν in ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, which is often written ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΧΟΣ, and the like.

matic critic, is observable in the heads of the kings, which, in the earlier times, if a little coarse, are striking and characteristic; while in the later they sink to a conventional type, rudely and poorly rendered, and so uniform that the power of distinguishing one sovereign from another rests no longer upon feature, but upon mere differences in the arrangement of hair, or beard, or head-dress.

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